TOWARDS THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION

Editors

R. B. Y. SCOTT

GREGORY VLASTOS

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R. B. Y. SCOTT AND GREGORY VLASTOS
EDITORS

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FOREWORD

I COMMEND the reading of this book to all persons who are concerned for the coming of the Kingdom of God in this world of man. These are times of strange and rapid transition; and we have to decide quickly whether our world is to be a Christian world or its antithesis. The purpose of this book is to show the way to a Christian world. I have to confess that I have not read the whole book, but with what I have read I find myself in reasonably close agreement. But I know the authors, and — whether I always agree with them or not — I do know that it would be difficult to discover anywhere a group of men more passionately desirous of creating a world after the mind of Christ and more dedicated personally to him, than are the writers of this book. They are also men who have pondered deeply the matters upon which they write; and I have no doubt that the book will be a very important contribution to the current discussion of the ends and values of a Christian society, and the ways and means of achieving it.

RICHARD ROBERTS
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" PROPHETICUS "

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PREFACE

THIS book expresses a common conviction in the face of a common problem. As Christians we face the present crisis of the Western world. As Christians we believe that our historic faith has revolutionary resources for this crisis. We acknowledge that religion has often functioned as an opiate, and is so functioning in large areas of the world to-day. But we see within religion the same dialectic of reaction and revolution that marks other phases of the social process. We affirm the faith of the prophets and of Jesus as a disturbing, renovating force. How lay hold upon this for our own day? What changes in our thinking and living, what orientation in our philosophy, theology, ethics, economics, politics, preaching and worship would constitute repentance for the coming Kingdom?

Since this is not an academic question, this book is not an academic document. It is a statement of faith, and a tract for the times. It makes no claim to finality of statement, completeness of exposition, or uniformity of doctrine. Difficulties of time and distance have prevented frequent consultations among the writers. We have lacked the opportunity for constant discussion, which would convert an underlying unanimity into detailed and explicit agreement. But we feel justified in bringing together our separate contributions towards the answer of a common problem.

For his gracious foreword we express our special thanks to Dr. Richard Roberts, until quite recently the Moderator of the United Church of Canada to which all contributors belong.

R. B. Y. SCOTT
GREGORY VLASTOS

TOWARDS THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION

JOHN LINE

I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

I. Rise of the Philosophy of Laissez Faire

To deal fully with the growth of the philosophical principles that have some bearing on the nature and outlook of Christianity in the present world would be to write a complete history of philosophy and a comparison and evaluation of all important philosophical ideas. Nothing in human thought that has proved its worth can be indifferent to a religion whose truth and scale of interest and meaning are as wide as those of Christianity are claimed to be. To attempt so comprehensive a survey however is not our intention, nor is it required for the purposes of this volume. If the wisdom of all the ages is relevant to Christian religious inquiry, it is also true that there are relatively recent thought developments that have helped in a special way to mould the present world outlook and to determine the character and difficulties of the Christian task in our time. It is to these that we shall limit ourselves in this brief sketch.

The impetus to these developments can be sought among the stirring movements, intellectual and other, of the eighteenth century. By the time this century is ushered in, the

dissolution of feudalism is well advanced. The transition to commercialism, consequent upon the desire of European nations to exploit the immense potential mineral and other resources of newly discovered lands, is practically complete and its results are beginning to appear. Before this time influences had been at work tending to establish in men's thought a high valuation of the individual. The Renaissance, for example, discovered the individual in culture, as the Reformation stressed the individual in religion. This individualism was undermining the old order, social, political and ecclesiastical. But commercialism was proving a counter force, since it was no more favourable to individual freedom than the feudalism it had largely displaced. If it did away on one side with restrictions upon men's rights, it imposed them on another side in an even more rigid form. It was against these new imposts that the eighteenth century rose in revolt, thereby giving birth to our present world.

The restrictions were on the whole politico-economic and it was in the field of economic activity that they were found most irksome. The reason is plain. The decay of feudalism led to the development of centralization in the state, and colonial and trade expansion made the economic interest the dominant element in the policies of rival states. These policies could not be carried out without the risk — and actually were not carried out without the frequent event — of war, and on this account, for the maintenance of armies and so on, princes and governments needed money beyond what royal estates and prerogatives could provide. Hence it became their aim, in pursuing trade with other nations, to acquire treasure, supplies of the monetary metals. Their method was to achieve a balance of exports over imports that would give them a title to gold and silver payments. This is the system of economic state-making known as mercantilism, which prevailed in economics both in theory and practice for

two centuries, the chief end of which was to make the state strong through the possession of monetary wealth. "All nations who have no mines of their own," wrote a leading mercantilist in 1669, "are enriched with gold and silver by one and the same means. . . . The ordinary means to increase our wealth and treasure is by Forraign Trade. . . . This ought to be encouraged, for upon it hangs the great revenue of the king, the honour of the kingdom . . . the sinews of our wars."

To secure this "favourable" trade balance governments interfered with and regulated commercial activity at every turn. Duties and other embargoes and export bounties were multiplied, while the need for governmental revenues led to enormous extension of taxation under multitudinous new forms. The whole process became extremely vexatious and burdensome, especially to agricultural producers. For these were not only heavily taxed but found their markets restricted, both through the duties on their produce imposed by other nations, and through the reduced purchasing power of urban workers due to lowering of wages to facilitate export of manufactured commodities. Such, then, were some of the disabilities suffered under mercantilism that had in the eighteenth century become altogether grievous. Because of them, men who had been taught by religion to feel their true worth and had begun to throw off older tyrannies found themselves under the heel of another even more severe. But neither could mercantilism endure once this was felt; the time for its overthrow had fully come.

The attack was led by the French Physiocrats and Adam Smith. Back of these lay the ideas of Rousseau, who idealized man in his natural state, contrasting the *ordre naturelle,* the ideal order whose arrangements were perfect and whose laws were the will of God, and the *ordre positive,* whose laws are human and whose arrangements are the imperfect ones of

existing governments. On this order of nature the Physiocrats built their doctrine. They believed that men in society are subject to natural laws in the same way that the equilibrium of nature is maintained by physical laws. Hence the individual in society has natural and inalienable rights and should be free to exercise those rights subject only to such limitations as are needed to insure the equal freedom of others. Government which is established by consent exists to safeguard these rights and liberties and should confine itself to the amount of interference this end entails.

This doctrine of natural right was enforced especially in the economic sphere. Here it meant the freedom of the individual to profit by his own labour, and it was held that the untrammeled use of this freedom, and its extension to include freedom of trade and exchange, would be the surest means to increase wealth and further general progress. Hence governments should leave the individual to follow the dictates of freedom; *laissez faire, laissez passer,* rather than the restraints of mercantilism, should be their motto in the economic field.

This philosophy of economic freedom found an even doughtier champion in Adam Smith (1723–1790). Influenced by the Physiocrats, he shared their belief that the individual should be left to the guidance of his own interests in economic pursuits. It is well known that in his moral philosophy Smith lays stress not on self-interest but on sympathy, and this has often seemed to imply a contradiction between his ethical and economic doctrines. The contradiction may, however, be only apparent, since his economic philosophy includes also the idea that through a beneficent natural working the free play of individual desires is not only not inconsistent with the welfare of the community but may be the means to it; and it can be conceived that such natural harmony of personal and social good requires the presupposi-

tion of just such a social factor in the individual as Smith's ethical teaching assumes. Accepting this view we not only see a deep-lying agreement rather than a conflict in his total thought, but we can no longer hold, as many have done, that he treated the individual even in his economic being as a purely egoistic force. Thus his share in bringing about the enthronement of selfishness in economics may not be as great as is sometimes thought.

It should be remembered, too, that Smith leaves room for a great deal of governmental intervention, not only at the point where this becomes necessary to prevent the interference of one person with the free self-seeking of another, but also to the degree of restraining private economic policy and practice when the general interest so demands. He conceives, for example, that the government might interfere in banking if it is being carried on in such a way that the liberty of the few is endangering the rights of all; and he taught that the rate of interest should be legally fixed, though with due regard to the market rate. It is true, however, that his view of nature and human nature was such that he did not believe governmental regulation of economic activity would need to predominate, but rather that the best results would accrue generally if individuals were let alone.

The successors of Smith, the philosophical radicals and the members of the "Manchester School," took this last-named principle and applied it unreservedly. They pushed to the limit the idea of the individual as a law to himself, and, as one writer puts it, fairly hustled England into full acceptance of the gospel of laissez faire. In their minds the pre-ordained harmony or identity of private and public interests, which we can regard as the premise of this entire philosophical and sociological movement, has become almost a metaphysical absolute, so that they see an infallible path to general happiness or the common good through the self-interested strivings

or even cupidities of individual men. Hence their purpose is to restrict the sphere of state action so that private initiative may have free rein. This point of view has ideal expression, though again by one whose breadth of understanding forbids too rigid a rendering, in the writings of John Stuart Mill, especially in his *Essay on Liberty,* published in 1859. In this the individual is extolled, the supreme worth of personality comes to the fore, and self-realization (rather than happiness as in Mill's other writings) is the final aim of existence. Wherefore Mill sets clear limits to the authority of the state over the individual and pleads convincingly for freedom of thought and action.

With this short outline before us, let us turn to a brief criticism of the laissez faire philosophy, including especially an estimation of its place and meaning in our life to-day.

II. Liberty and Equality

It is a commonplace among present-day radicals that the laissez faire doctrine has, in the century or more since its promulgation, been falsified by events. The idea that it will lead to common well-being if each is permitted to work from self-interest, was, it is said, an unproved assumption at the time of its adoption, and it has since been completely disproved. For men have been given liberty enough in expending their initiative and energy in private aggrandizement; the result has not been a universal diffusion of welfare, but the desolation and inequities which now abound.

This is true, but it is no fair summary of the merits of laissez faire individualism as such. It will seem so to be only to those who think of socialism and individualism as a blank antithesis, or take it as the sign of a low valuation of the individual if one is interested in the social good. But surely the contrary should be the case, since society is com-

posed of individuals. And on grounds that are similarly obvious there is for the present-day social idealist a vital truth in Physiocratic individualism, which in our recoil from the fallacies of laissez faire we must be at pains not to lose.

We have already implied that the apostle of individualism in the eighteenth century was Rousseau. But in his philosophy there was the promise of things very different from the selfish individualism of later economics. His principle of human rights and worth was a factor in creating the modern democratic spirit and a potent contributor to a tremendous humanitarian and social advance. Take an example. "Rousseau," says the biographer of William Carey, the pioneer modern missionary, "never gave a thought to Christian Missions; yet his message helped to raise men's conceptions of the backward races, and to arouse on their behalf a brighter hope. . . . Carey's world-mission programme was Rousseau made practical. Convinced of the common and equal rights of all men, he yearned to share with all his affluent inheritance in Christ."[1] Here we are reminded that Rousseau's appreciation of the individual was accompanied by a doctrine of equality, which was not only its proper corollary, since the appreciation extended, of course, to all individuals, but was the source of its power in his own age as in ours. If it meant to a Carey in missionary terms that individuals belonging to some races are not to be privileged beyond those who belong to others, it means to us as we face our problems that within each race or society no one person more than another should be debarred from opportunity or from the means to a satisfactory life. A just estimation of the individual, in other words, makes one sensitive to the need for just conditions; a true individualism is the inspirer of socialism instead of its opposer. The effort to amend society so as to abolish injustice, privilege and underprivi-

[1] S. P. Carey, *William Carey*, pp. 7, 8.

lege follows directly if we make the individual the end of the social process. This is our ground for holding that in claiming a stake in the discovery of the individual in the eighteenth century socialists need be second to none.

But if this is so, why is laissez faire individualism, which arose from this discovery, now arraigned for judgment, with only the foes of social change willing to assume its defence?

The answer lies in the fate that befell the idea of equality, whose logical place in, and essential importance for, the philosophy of individualism we have just seen. As long as individualism remained loyal to its ideal of equality its results were salutary. This is exemplified in the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, in which, in estimating the hedonic effects of action, the happiness of one person, whatever his station, was as important as that of any other; each counted for one and no one for more than one. It is to this element in utilitarianism and not to its hedonism that T. H. Green traces its beneficial influence: "It has," he says, "tended to improve human conduct and character" and it has done this not by giving men "a more lively sense of their duty to others," but by leading them "to be less partial in judging who the others are, to consider all men as the others, and, on the ground of the claim of all men to an equal chance of happiness, to secure their political and promote their social equality."[2] Thus it was while keeping in mind its principle of equality and putting it to work that this philosophy brought benefits to the world.

But as individualism proceeded on its course in the nineteenth century it dropped its gospel of equality; it did this so completely that to-day a collectivism or socialism that seeks to restore the ideal of equality seems necessarily opposed to individualism. Of the eighteenth-century trilogy of liberty, equality and fraternity, only the first had the vitality

[2] *Prolegomena to Ethics,* Book IV, section 331.

to survive the industrial revolution or was compatible with the temper it engendered. It is this fact more than any other that introduces us to the darker side in the story of laissez faire.

The surrender of equality by individualism was made easy by the presence and influence of an essentially false conception of the nature of the individual. How did this arise? In the period preceding the industrial revolution English philosophers had given much thought to the question of human nature: was it something actuated entirely by egoistic impulses, benevolence being nothing more than their enlightened action; or was sympathy or benevolence an integral part of man, distinguishable from self-love? No agreement had been reached on the theoretical problem, although Hume and others, at the time of the rise of laissez faire, were stoutly maintaining the reality of disinterestedness. The laissez faire philosophy itself, however, partly through the passions the industrial revolution served to stimulate, took in its practical application the other route. It came to view the individual as moved almost solely by selfish interest; it saw in competition and acquisitiveness his natural bent, so that in living to amass gain for himself no matter what might be the effect of his doing so on the fate of others, he expressed his true being.

The end of this trend within laissez faire was the Economic Man, whom we have become accustomed to calling an abstraction. The tragedy is that he, the selfish acquisitive type, has been all too concrete; nor has he confined himself to economics. He has invaded religion, for example, and has helped to intensify the overemphasis on that aspect of salvation in which it is a personal and private good. We are concerned now, however, with his part in extruding equality from the philosophy of individualism; and it is not hard to see that part being enacted. For to glorify not the individual

merely but the self-seeking individual, would play havoc with equalitarian concepts.

To make persons the end of social and political organization is ideal if you include all persons; but if you give persons the right to be predatory and then hand the world over to them, you set up warfare rather than equality and fraternity, a warfare in which the victor will take the spoils. For the equality of which we have spoken is the equal right of all men to opportunity and to the means to self-fulfillment, a right which it is the purpose of society to secure and make real for all its members. But such equality in no sense means that men are endowed with equal power. In power men are vastly unequal, so that to set the individual loose to play for his own hand will mean that the stronger will use for their own ends their initial superiority, will increase it by the advantage they thus gain; and this natural proceeding, occurring cumulatively through the years, will make the strong a race of possessors, with the weak becoming more and more helpless and dispossessed. Social development under this influence, instead of aiding the realization of equality, will thus beget colossal inequalities. It is this process, distorting society from its function of securing equality into courses destructive of it, that has been going on for a hundred years or more; and it is due, we are trying to show, to a false philosophy, a false view of the individual and his motives, through which, even while professing the ideal of equality, men have in practice trampled it under foot. And it is because laissez faire individualism became embroiled with this false philosophy and so is answerable for its outcome that there is such wide and fierce revolt against it in the world to-day.

The fruits of the abrogation of equality by philosophic individualism did not, however, wait for our own age. They matured very quickly and were of a sort to cause real tension

in discerning minds. On the one hand, Ricardo as an individualistic economist fell in with the new trend and, in face of the inequalities that were emerging among economic groups, used the ideal of individual liberty in behalf especially of the class of capital owners, sanctioning by means of it their right to apply their free enterprise in the accumulation of gain. Individualism in his hands was a class individualism, if we may use so self-contradictory a phrase. John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, sensitive to the accruing ills of a selfish industrialism, shows towards the end of his life a distinct distrust of his earlier individualistic and libertarian teaching. Signs are not wanting in his thought of the beginnings of a collectivistic trend. It is Ricardo's attitude, however, that has prevailed down to a recent time. Individualism has become well habituated to being a class philosophy and it still serves, not to voice the needs of all the people as it did at first, but to buttress the position and powers of the successful group; just as its watchword, "Liberty," is still the cry that greets any proposal for democratic or collective action toward juster social conditions.

So far we have seen, then, that there are values for the present-day social and humanitarian idealist in the individualist philosophy of the eighteenth century; that that philosophy arrived in the nineteenth century, having lost in transit the concept of equality or of essential human worth with which those values are connected; and that this latter fact is the cause of, and justifies, the increasing antagonism to individualism or the laissez faire doctrine which is to-day visible. We see also, however, the need for discrimination in that antagonism; it should be directed not against individualism as such, which is a humane concept, nor against eighteenth-century individualism in its pristine form, but against the nineteenth- and twentieth-century pseudo-individualism which survives after the standards and habits

engendered by a predatory industrialism have ejected from a true individualism the element which above all gave it spiritual worth.

We must proceed now to one or two special problems that emerge from the foregoing discussion.

III. The Question of Liberty

It was made clear above that of the three concepts, liberty, equality and fraternity, men retained only the first after the onset of industrialism. This statement is valid if we understand it formally, but if we take it to refer to the essence of liberty it is beset by queries. Is liberty realizable alone? Can an age traitorous to equality and fraternity possess true liberty?

The answer, on our principles, is, No; for the simple reason that equality and fraternity are not collateral with liberty but components of it. (We shall for the sake of brevity confine ourselves to the relations of liberty and equality, and what we say can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to fraternity and liberty.) If we glance at the meaning of liberty we shall see at once that equality is essential to it. For it is no longer considered a sufficient view of liberty that conceives it as consisting in a maximum of non-interference at the hands of others; such individualist liberty, says Jacques Maritain, "in the sense of freedom of choice and as an end in itself, has faded nowadays," even though "it was the ruling fashion in the nineteenth century." [3]

Maritain speaks, however, of another liberty which lies in autonomous participation in a common life so ordered as to "put each citizen in the way of advancing towards perfect freedom." [4] Liberty of this sort is the true art of living to-

[3] *Freedom in the Modern World*, pp. 39, 40.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

gether; it is personal and even individual, for, as in the case of equality, the duty of society is to secure it for the individual; but at the point, if point there be, where *ego* and *alter* divide, it is social rather than egoistic. It is the individual functioning freely to fulfill the ends of his being, but within a field of relations with others through which he contributes to communal self-fulfillment which in turn assists reciprocally, as it is essential to, his own self-realization. Such liberty is real only if the relations are relations of justice; it is complete only if the bonds between those who are joined by these relations are bonds of brotherhood. To such a degree, then, is equality the prerequisite of any form of liberty in which it is an ethical and social and not a merely selfish good.

This will become clearer if we test it by practical examples. We are often told, for instance, that Russia, in seeking to establish a system of equality, is doing it at the expense of liberty; like ourselves she has divorced liberty and equality but in the reverse way. On what is actually happening in Russia the present writer must speak with reserve; but if it is the case that the individual is subject to many outward restrictions, that is not final as to the status of liberty in the sense just given. The real question is what these restrictions are for; are they to satisfy the desires of favoured individuals or groups, or are they for the sake of an end, which the Russian people are working together to achieve, that includes the one individual's good equally with that of all others? Men with the will to be a community or to live in society have always realized that some bounds must be set to individual caprice, the individual must make some adjustments to the will of his fellows if associative living is to succeed. It is no abrogation of liberty to be called to make these adjustments, so long as the privations this may entail are meted out fairly, whatever is demanded of one being demanded of all.

If Russia, then, is building a real equality we need not fear for liberty. The problem of liberty faces us when we turn to view our own condition. No one will question that the liberty of the age of laissez faire has been a liberty for some more than others; but as we are now conceiving liberty such inequality means there has been no real liberty, for a liberty that is not enjoyed by all is not true liberty even in those who possess it. Liberty is an issue in our civilization no less than justice. "Men may be deprived," says Berdyaev, "of freedom of the spirit, freedom of creativeness. . . . They may be deprived of economic freedom, if such freedom is conceived as liberty to realize a worthy human existence. . . . In the capitalist world freedom has been the privilege of a few, and a doubtful privilege even for them. . . . The crisis of capitalism is the crisis of liberty."[5] Nowhere is this crisis more pointed than on this North American continent. Here we regard ourselves as liberty-loving and are ready at all times to defend our liberty, especially in such forms as the right to sell one's labour or to exploit one's neighbour, no matter what desolation such action may leave in its path. But true liberty leaves no desolation. Liberty is civic normalcy or social health and, like bodily health, the more men possess it the less sensible they are of it. It is a sign that all is not well with liberty when men boast of it. Our civilization has had the name and shadow of liberty without the substance; for the substance of liberty as social health lies in a healthful state of the whole social process. Equality and fraternity, as we have referred to them, are integral parts of this process. For the Canadian and American or any other people there is no way to liberty save through the establishment of these.

[5] *The Fate of Man in the Modern World,* pp. 52, 53.

IV. The Individual and Society

The problem which here confronts us grows out of our criticism of the laissez faire philosophy according to which, while that philosophy was right in exalting the individual, it proceeded from a false conception of his nature. Its error lay specifically in holding that he was necessarily dominated by self-interest, or at least that self-interest furnished the motive in his economic pursuits. We shall suggest over against this what we believe to be a truer view of the individual and his relation to the social whole.

It would seem idyllic if we could assert that so far from being an inveterate egoist the individual is by nature altruistic. Many romanticists have been inclined to this view, and there is at least as much to be said for it as for the opposite belief. "Psychology has made it clear," says Urban, "that so far as native endowment is concerned, man is as much an altruist as an egoist."[6] But psychology has also shown, to quote Urban further, "that the self, or personality, is not something that is inborn but acquired, and that its acquisition is the product of social intercourse or interaction with society."[7] We may surmise, then, that where the earlier philosophers erred was not in their particular representation of human nature so much as in their conceiving it to be morally anything at all as fixed or given. The individual at birth answers to no stereotyped moral pattern; he is a creature of mixed tendencies and possibilities which await life and training to become determinate or actualized. "The young child, if morally neglected," says Hollander, "manifests his animal propensities without restraint. . . . Not having learned to subordinate his propensities or in-

[6] *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 138.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–39.

stincts to social requirements, his natural trend is not altruistic; nor is it egoistic on any high plane." [8]

This does not mean, however, that the growth of the individual is determined solely by social or environmental forces, or that the responses out of which habits and character are built are at all levels automatic. In primitive life the bond between the individual and the group was very close; "the group," says Lévy-Bruhl, "was the unit of which the individual was a mere element . . . the individual belonged to his group and not to himself." [9] Similarly St. Paul conceives persons in an ideal fellowship as members one of another; as eye or hand to the body, so is each individual organic to the whole. This is one side of the truth; the individual is made for society and depends upon it, and will always be conditioned by social circumstance. But it is also true that the way of progress from primitive conditions has lain through the break-up of the relation which Lévy-Bruhl describes. From it the individual has emerged and become aware of himself as a unique centre of being and activity, able to ally himself with his fellows and distinguish himself from them, presenting to himself ideals or ends and transcending himself in encompassing them. So that the individual's relation to society is not that of a part to the whole; if he is conscious of the social whole, he is also self-conscious, and his interaction with society is distinguished by the fact that he not only does, but wills to, participate in the whole.

There are therefore two things to be remembered in considering the individual within his social *milieu*. They are: the dependence of the individual on the social environment, and equally his unique individuality. We can construct from these a criterion for judging both the present social system

[8] *The Psychology of Misconduct*, p. 35.
[9] *The Soul of the Primitive*, pp. 87, 109.

and proposals for social change; for it seems to us a sufficient test of any such proposal or system whether, on the one hand, it recognizes the part played by the environment in determining the individual, and whether, on the other, its tendency as affecting the individual is towards quickening and furthering, not deadening and obstructing, his unique capabilities.

Many would say without more ado that current revolutionary social programs would fare badly before the second part of this test. Thus Berdyaev's judgment of communism and fascism is that they "justly protest against the degeneration of formal liberty. . . . But instead of proceeding to the true freedom of man as a spiritual nature, they proceed to both formal and actual denial of liberty. From the oppression of human personality in a capitalistic economy . . . they proceed to the unification of the same oppression and extend it over the whole race." [10] There is a wide tendency to mete a like summary dismissal to socialism in any form. So far from demanding that social conditions stimulate the individual's unique nature, socialists are accused of desiring a new social scheme in which, while things will run smoothly and everybody will be snugly housed and fed, the individual will function according to plan in the place assigned him, and all call for resource, initiative and even responsibility will be at an end.

It will be the task of other contributors to this book to weigh critically the case for and against socialism; here we pause just to say that people who fear that under a socialistic system the individual would be depersonalized should be mindful of the depersonalization that is occurring now. This is usually conceived as due to the way in which many functions of our civilization have been mechanized or technicalized, with the result that the vocation of multitudes has been

[10] *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

reduced to a narrow, specialized routine in which many of their faculties are given no scope. Such an explanation, however, is superficial. No doubt the coming of the machine has compelled the worker during his hours of work to adjust his natural organic rhythms to machine movements; but on the other hand, the machine has made it possible to release men from the necessity of being absorbed chiefly in physical toil in any form. That this release has not come into effect is owing to our system of ownership which permits the owner of the machine to subject it to his own advantage; it is due to the same influence that the machine has helped to further that concentration of industrial control at points remote from the worker in interest as well as physical distance, through which he has not only, as seen already, been deprived of economic freedom, but has largely lost the sense of any moral relation to his work. A further consequence is that the trends due to mechanization have strayed far beyond industry itself, and standardization and a-personalism are overtaking us in every area of life. But all this is not finally chargeable to the machine, for if the machine requires that certain parts of man's activity be routinized, it makes up for this by the promise it holds of compensating benefits. Depersonalization under present conditions must be laid at the door of our social and industrial organization that blocks the path to the realization of these benefits. It is on this, by the tests of our criterion, that judgment falls.

We have said that according to prevalent belief communist and socialist alternatives to the present system would serve us no better. Neither would furnish the condition of freedom or of opportunity for the creative self-action necessary to full personal life; on the contrary, general ends would still be sought at the cost of depersonalization. We would bid the reader to defer decision on this point until he has

considered what is written in dealing with communism and socialism in other chapters of this book. For our part, we would remind him that socialism, in keeping with the first part of our criterion, recognizes the potency of the environment and, conforming now to our second test, seeks precisely that redirection of environmental influences whereby they would no longer deny, as is so often the case at present, the individual's unique potentialities, but would become serviceable to them. This being the aim of socialism, it hardly merits the above adverse opinion. We would recall further that the end, in respect of which other systems actually or allegedly fail, is Christianity's ideal. Fullness of personal life, realized in ways that do not hinder but help others in their effort towards the same goal, is what she promises to men. This is the ground of the conviction of the writers of this book: that in the pending revolutionary social changes Christianity has a critical stake, and must arouse herself to insure that, whatever may be their formal nature, their quality and spirit shall be such as lead to the fulfillment of her vision of human good.

V. Materialism and Totalitarianism

Our attention so far has been given to philosophical questions that have definite practical relation to the outlook of Christianity in the present social crisis. There are other philosophical issues belonging in the same connection that are hardly less important, and we must now give one or two of them such notice as our space allows.

Many Christians believe that the chief barrier to the triumph of Christianity is philosophic materialism. Communism is the foe of Christianity concretely because it preaches materialism; although it is also acknowledged that people are already practical materialists under the influences and

incitements of the present commercial and profit-seeking age.

It is not germane to our purpose to study theoretical or metaphysical materialism, which reduces all forms of existence to matter and its laws. Our concern is with materialism as an historic social force. Religious, especially Catholic, historians are wont to trace this to the influence of Rousseau whose ideal of equality, while in some ways as we have shown a humanizing element, was equality at the natural level and not the equal relation of all to a transcendent God. The trend received great impetus from the industrial revolution and the technical utilization of science in which, for the first time on any major scale, man applied his intellect to his material problems. The final issue, seen in our own day, is that man is bewildered by his unaccustomed power over the material, and has been beguiled into picturing his progress and well-being in natural-material form.

Religious people have naturally recoiled from this attitude, but in so doing have fallen into the arms of a false dualism which conceives it to be the sign of the highly spiritual to disparage the material. There is no more un-Christian tendency in contemporary religion. Its fountain-head is not Jesus or the New Testament but an orientalized Hellenism. Jesus served the material and bodily needs of men, not as a means to inducing them to heed what he had to say about their souls, but because it was itself the work of the Kingdom. So to-day the will to enthrone humanity and justice in the field of the material is spiritual, provided it be sincere.

Neo-Thomists like Christopher Dawson tell us that the one thing Jesus taught about the economic was that it doesn't really matter. This is true if it means that the economic is not life's chief end, and condemns a condition of things which constrains men to behave as if it were. The conquest of practical materialism will come through a transforming

of this condition into one where the material will be made to serve man's higher and mutual good and the individual, freed from the necessity of making a living, will learn to live.

Another development fraught with meaning for practical religion comes through efforts that are being made to transcend the failure of individualism; on the one hand by making its chief emphasis still more exclusive, and on the other by reaction against it. The first reflects the influence of evolution which showed advance in nature to be the fruit of individual struggle for survival and self-furtherance. Nietzsche, for example, applied evolution to the extant Christian morality, judging it to be a source of race deterioration since by its practice of pity and service it helped to perpetuate weaker types. He would substitute a " master-morality " under which through the strong, affirming their natural vigour and dominance, a super-humanity would emerge. This is an individualism that not only makes excuses for egoism but preaches it as a duty. It becomes the second phase of the attempt to overcome the failure of individualism, namely the reaction against it, by becoming allied with a concept of the state, and the transference to the state of its egoism, its devotion to absolute self-ends.

This concept of the state is also the sequel to nineteenth-century tendencies; for example, the philosophy of Hegel which, so far from making the individual a law to himself, saw in the state the truly spiritual or ideal element, and so far from making freedom the degree of the individual's isolation from society, held that only in the state does the individual attain true freedom. The Nietzschean doctrine of self-affirmation joined to this state absolutism has produced the totalitarian idea, which expresses the revolt against individualism in thoroughgoing form. It is, in the dialectical historic sequence, the logical antithesis towards social unity, after individualism, in picturing each individual as capable

of a separate good, has so far atomized social existence as to threaten social anarchy. Moreover, in the measure in which totalitarianism is inimical to freedom, or tends, as was said before, to depersonalize, its way had been prepared by individualism. For under the doctrine that self-interest is the mainspring of life the individual was already forfeiting his being as an ethical and social person; in his role of Economic Man he had gone far to invite depersonalization.

This clash between individualism and totalitarianism is one of the tension points of the modern world; it is a place where Christianity claims to offer the *via media*. For with the one it exalts the individual, but it comprehends the need for unity no less than the other. But whereas totalitarianism imposes unity or solidarity from above, Christianity creates among men a common spirit; and it is through this that it promises to preserve a true individualism while gathering men into a unified life. The will toward mutuality which it inspires and enjoins is at once the law of an inner social cohesion and the expression of the highest attributes of personal nature. Socialist Christianity rests upon the conviction that because of the natural unity of life this law of mutuality must be applied to outer relations as well as inward. It seeks the reconciliation of freedom and fellowship in the faith that society can be so ordered that it will serve the needs of men as persons, not as mere units of society; and that in the comradeship of such a society individuals will each in himself attain full grandeur of life.

VI. Conclusions

We may close this chapter with one or two practical deductions, following from our entire argument, touching the form of Christian responsibility in the present world.

(1) We have seen that self-realization and personal lib-

erty, inalienable as is the individual's right to them, are anarchic forces save as we conceive the individual as a being of social structure and capabilities. This perception ought to help in freeing the Christian mind from the superstition that the right to aggrandizement is a necessary spur to enterprise such as leads to the possession of self-reliant character. This superstition is a terrible incubus on the religious will. It makes men fear that without the lure of private gain life would lose its incentives and mankind would become flabby and morally vapid; we must perpetuate what amounts to the present economic system if we are to continue to have men of independent spirit. Could anything so effectively paralyze the effort towards an unselfish or Christian world as the notion that if it were achieved it would be of doubtful moral benefit! We are saying that to realize the social qualities of the individual would rid us of this notion. For the latter assumes that desire for selfish advantage is the really operative motive; it is the laissez faire ethical philosophy at its very worst. It assumes too the static view of the self, conceiving it as built on a substrate of self-interest, where the modern view as we have seen makes the self dynamic, picturing it primarily as a complex of possibilities among which the altruistic are as genuine as the egoistic.

Now if this modern view is valid there is no reason why training and environmental factors should not be directed and ordered to evoke disinterested impulses just as readily as selfish; or why our altruistic nature should not furnish incentives to self-achievement fully as powerful as those our selfish nature seems able to yield. Thus the delusion that only for the sake of self-enrichment will men put forth their best exertions disappears — a result which Christians should acclaim and build into their teaching and work. For Christianity has always commanded men to employ their re-

source and seek self-transcendence not in striving for selfish emolument but in serving the good of others equally with their own. But this has seemed Utopian and we have been afraid to venture upon it or order the world in conformity to it. Psychology now testifies to its practicability; and the results in the present world of following the contrary practice make it imperative that no time be lost in restoring it as the heart and essence of the Christian rule of life.

(2) That the individual is determined by social forces but is at the same time self-responsible, is a second conclusion of our study that calls for a reorienting of Christian effort. It demands, on the one hand, that account be taken of social causation. The social environment is made by man, being largely a crystallization of his interests, preferences and ends. Hence it is not a lifeless entity but a thing for weal or woe of spiritual significance. Being made by man, it can be re-made to express more perfectly what is ennobling in human possibility, and to be the servant of, where now it often thwarts, man's higher will. But along with this the second principle will require no slackening in the church's historic activity looking to the inception of the right life-purpose in the individual. For if it is as we have said — that the relation of individual and society is not that of part and whole, but that it is characteristic of the individual that he wills to place himself in the whole or, in other words, is there responsibly — then with the effort to perfect environmental conditions must go the continual spiritual renewal that sustains responsibility and the personal self-discipline by which it is directed. To change the form of the community will not lead far if men falter in their will to be a community; nor will it avail to remove outward stumbling-blocks to personal creativity if inner creative life is unreplenished.

Christianity needs a method of work that will indissolubly blend these two aspects to the extent of ending the *entweder*

oder between working for an order of justice in social life and refurbishing and redirecting the interior lives of persons. Only as we labour equally in both spheres can we insure that unredeemed natural forces will not pull down in the one as fast as we build in the other.

JOHN LINE

II

THE THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

IT is the fashion of our time to decry theology as an irrelevant encumbrance to real religion. The up-to-date preacher likes to announce his subject as "deeds not creeds," and a few years ago even a college president could write: "The day calls for a gospel that is not theological but serval. . . . We have insisted on dogma to the depletion of our vital energy. . . . The day calls for doerlogues, not theologues." [1]

Theology, however, is nothing other than the attempt at clear and orderly thinking about religion. Rightly conceived, so far from being a detriment, it is a necessary aid in interpreting religious experience and in making intelligible the means to it. Hostility to theology properly arises only when its forms have become so remote from living religious issues that it no longer serves this end. Then the need occurs not to abolish theology but to rehabilitate it in accord with the actualities and aspirations of the religion of the age.

This conception of the place and importance of theology is confirmed by the fact that vital periods in the history of religion have not, as a rule, been characterized by neglect of theology. The reverse is the case. A great religious

[1] Harper, *The New Church for the New Time* (Fleming H. Revell Co.), pp. 52, 53.

awakening normally discovers the insufficiency of former religious concepts and stimulates the search for new ones; it gives rise, in other words, to creative intellectual, that is theological, activity. "From the earliest Greek theologians," says Whitehead, "to Jerome and Augustine: from Augustine to Aquinas: from Aquinas to Luther, Calvin and Suarez: from Suarez to Leibniz and John Locke: every great religious movement was accompanied by a noble rationalistic justification. . . . Luther defended ninety-seven theses, Calvin produced his *Institutes*."[2] The new concepts are a means of conserving and transmitting the gains of the new movement; they serve in this way so long as they are adapted to the religious and intellectual outlook and are in harmony with advancing knowledge. It is the task of theology, through continually clarifying and amplifying the concepts, to insure this harmony.

It is the belief of the writers of this book that we are approaching to-day an era of religious change; or at any rate, that some momentous religious renewal is needed if religion is to continue to be a vital influence in the world's life, or if the new phase of civilization upon which we are entering is to have that ideal quality which is given by religion. It is also our belief that the religion which will achieve or witness this awakening will, along with what else it brings to men, have a message of justice and deliverance for those who by reason of unjust economic conditions or for whatever cause sit in despair and in the shadow of death. Now we may conceive that like other great religious epochs the one that is thus destined for our own age will yield its own emphases in religious belief; it will require a theology as the embodiment and vehicle of its faith and hope. It is our design in this chapter to indicate what in our view will be the principles and tendencies of this theology.

[2] *Adventures of Ideas* (The Macmillan Co.), p. 27.

We are greeted at the start by the question of the attitude the new forward religious movement will be likely to assume to extant theological systems. Will it find one of these more suited to its aims than any of the others and adopt it with such changes as will bring it into completer harmony? Or will it derive elements from all, and, after adding ingredients of its own, unite them in a new and unique way? This is something we can decide only after glancing at these current theologies to see how far their ways of expressing religious truth are relevant to present spiritual needs.

The two theologies that we shall consider, as occupying a large part of the background of people who are likely to read this volume, are first, the orthodox system of Evangelical Protestantism; and second, the Liberal or Modernist form of religious belief. We shall look at each of these and try to judge its relation to the mission of Christianity as conceived in this work.

I. Evangelical Orthodoxy

The Evangelical Protestant type of religious teaching and life has had more to do with the shaping of civilization and culture in North America than any other religious influence. The laying of the foundations of that culture was very largely the work of members of reformed and evangelical religious groups that had been reckoned as dissenters in many of the older lands. It was to be free to exercise their religion that many who belonged to these groups had come to the New World. When Methodism in its turn appeared and proved so well suited to the spiritual needs of a frontier people, it but reinforced and made even more characteristic this Protestant Evangelical strain in American religion.

Evangelical Protestantism is manifold in form and the sects among which its adherents are scattered are too numer-

ous to count. But all its forms lay stress on the same major conceptions. These centre chiefly in the idea of salvation or justification which is made possible for the individual not through effort of his own but through the work and sole merit of Christ. Other than through Christ this salvation is unmediated; it is God's gift of grace to the individual who forsakes his sin and turns to him. He is constrained to turn by the Holy Spirit, just as it is the Spirit that inspires the faith in the individual that is the condition of the divine gift. Evangelical Protestantism proclaimed, in words it has made familiar, the gospel of God's "inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ," and taught that in an experience of personal salvation this redemption is fulfilled.

But if God bestowed this salvation freely upon men, if they were justified not by works or merit but by faith only, it was also believed that after receiving the gift they owed God all things, especially full obedience of heart and life. It was their duty in all their ways to act righteously according to the will of God. Thus there were nurtured among Evangelical Protestants high personal moral standards as well as deep and vital personal religion. Life was viewed as a high calling and its daily activity was carried on with great seriousness as under the eyes of God.

One may feel puzzled to find reasons for dissatisfaction with religious principles such as these. Surely a theology which puts the weight on vital religious experience and high ethical requirements is not one which the religious radicalism of our time can lightly disdain. Perhaps none of us need quarrel with the root emphases of Evangelical Protestantism. Nevertheless, as actually operative in the present world it has shown abundant deficiencies. To explain these we must turn not to the evangelical beliefs as they were formally, but to the way in which the trends of general

thought and historical circumstances limited their interpretation and scope. It is this that must largely determine our judgment of the sufficiency of the evangelical teaching for the new day.

The deficiencies in Evangelical Protestantism are connected with both its theory of salvation and its ethical outlook. As to the first, something was said in the previous chapter about the tendency, under the influence of nineteenth-century pseudo-individualism, to isolate the individual in his religious relation and present his good as something essentially realizable within himself. Now Evangelical Protestantism was fitted by its own doctrine to fall a prey to this tendency, for if salvation was God's direct gift and required no sacerdotal intermediary, still less would it need to be mediated through the individual's social interactions. Completely dependent in his relation to God, the individual was in the man-with-man dimension practically self-sufficient; he could be saved though all who were about him chose to be lost. We speak of this as a deficiency when judged by what the world to-day requires of religion because the result of thus separating the religious man from the social nexus is that he has not felt impelled to understand or accept responsibility for the trend of social forces, even though they have produced collective conditions and habits that are contrary to the religious spirit. He has in many cases profited by these conditions and habits and this has made him still less capable of including them within his religious concern or reaching a Christian judgment upon them.

The connection of the deficiencies of Evangelical Protestantism with its ethical outlook rests on the fact that while, as we saw, its ethical standards were high, they were limited in range. Their stress was on personal virtues, such as uprightness and sobriety, honesty and diligence. This goes back in part to the extreme revulsion of the first ages of

Protestantism from all things Catholic, the recoil in this case being from monasticism and the mendicancy of the friars. Here were men who lived not by their labour but by gifts that came through the toil of others; and in contrast, Protestantism came to glorify productive work and to see in economic self-maintenance something pleasing to God. More influential than this, however, in fixing the Protestant ethic permanently in this form, was the fact that Protestantism flourished chiefly among the peoples best placed to make use of the opportunities for expansion which developments in navigation and discovery were offering to European nations. The commercial aspiration with which these peoples became imbued would have been sufficient of itself to have gained for the virtues just named a high place in the dutiful life; for they are clearly the ones that would be called for in commercial and economic activity and dealings, and they would help more than any others towards economic success. Nor would we imply that they are nothing more than this. They are a part of right living and are not less essential because they happen to be in some ways expedient; and in inculcating them through the generations Protestantism has given not the least of its services to the world.

But if they are essential they are not inclusive, and to this fact is due their part in the defects of Protestantism. These defects consist again in the failure to inspire men with social responsibility. For if honesty, industry and the other virtues are tributary to success, it is but a step to regard success as the reward of virtue, to see in outward prosperity the sign of inward grace and of having earned the favour of God. Conversely, men who are not successful have in all likelihood not practised these virtues. Viewing things in this light would be a direct bar to the feeling of social responsibility since the responsibility would be on the others for having brought their plight upon themselves. These are the as-

sumptions that still underlie men's judgments; as for example, when the unemployed are dismissed as a shiftless lot who would not work if they could. The world on the whole, however, is outgrowing this attitude, and it is a symptom of advance in social thinking that this is the case. It is a sign too that the ethical outlook of Evangelical Protestantism is no longer adequate or in some ways even pertinent to man's moral needs.

In an age that is revealing these shortcomings in Evangelical Protestantism, men are in a strange dilemma who were trained in it and trusted to it and may still have no other recourse. It taught them summarily to look at all times to God and for their own part to live upright lives. But to-day multitudes who have done all this as faithfully as men ever did are destitute and hopeless; having been for years upright and industrious, they are now on the street. This is the case with hosts of workers who have stayed loyally by the Evangelical word. Similarly many employers who have kept the Evangelical faith, even in conducting their business, have found in the past few years markets and profits slipping from them and have had no choice but to dismiss their workmen, cruel as they have felt the necessity to be. Even doing this has not prevented them in vast numbers from being driven from the field. Thus workers and employers alike are being swept by forces and conditions not of their personal making, with which the Protestant religious and ethical tradition has not equipped them to cope. They have trusted in God and striven to do his will, yet this evil has befallen them, evil which in its full meaning for their life is none the less ethical and spiritual because its occasion is economic. Yet they find no remedy for it in their Protestant heritage.

There is no question about the fact of men being in this dilemma. Sometimes, for example, men who are high in governmental or business affairs give their counsel to the

people. The latter, many of whom are denied the right to work and have no redress against the frustration entailed in this denial, are urged to tighten their belts and hold fast, perhaps to be more persevering; for so, they are assured, have hardship and adversity been conquered in the past. What egregious ineptitude! Exhortations to work hard to men whose one desire is a chance to work at all! And so the admonitions of financial and political leaders seem sheer humbug and earn only the derision of those to whom they are addressed. This, however, is less than just. For the men who thus call to us are not consciously insincere. Their voice again is the voice of Evangelical Protestantism, in which many of them have been reared; in speaking in this way they are giving all they have, all their religion has taught them and what heretofore has proved effectual and adequate in the emergencies that have arisen. That it fails in the present stress is not chargeable to them; but it is the witness, to us and to them alike, that we have come to a different age whose issues demand other guidance than the religion our fathers bequeathed to us was designed to afford.

Other chapters in this book will deal fully with the development that has wrought the difference between our age and that which saw the rise and formulation of the Evangelical doctrine. It will suffice here to express it summarily as a vast collectivization of human living, our interest lying in the resultant fact that many of our ethical and religious problems have become collective. A generation or more ago, if an individual was seen spending his time in idleness while his children were maintained by the state or by bountiful neighbours, it was felt, and usually rightly, that the moral onus rested on him; everything would come right if he would only become converted and give up drink. To-day, however, as we have already seen, there are multitudes in direst distress whose one aim, so long as conditions permitted

it, was to toil for livelihood for themselves and their dependants. That they are not now doing so is not something that can be remedied by moral homilies addressed to them as individuals; for the condition is not of their choosing nor within their power to correct. Its causes are social or collective. Its effects, however, are moral and spiritual, threatening alike the morale of its victims and the integrity of community life. Hence it is plain that as the life of man is now organized it is not enough to seek to save the separate souls of individuals; humanity can be saved or lost in its collective self. So that Evangelical Protestantism must widen its stakes to include ends of collective as well as individual righteousness, a gospel of social as well as personal salvation, if it is to meet the needs of the time.

II. Liberal Modernism

It is, perhaps, an error to associate Liberalism and Modernism. Modernism is a method or attitude while Liberalism, in its theological use, implies adherence to a mode of doctrine; and although they are often connected, yet the one does not necessarily lead to the other. The purpose of the Modernist is to recapture, through the criticism of theological formulae, the religious faith and life out of which they originally arose; he then proceeds to give this faith a new formulation in agreement with present thought and knowledge. Liberalism is this new formulation in one special instance, the one that is the result of present Modernist criticism of traditional creeds. Modernism itself, however, has no predilection for this form more than for any other; it would revise or abandon it as readily as it has done the older forms, if further knowledge or critical reflection seemed so to require.

Nevertheless, for our particular purpose the term "Liberal

Modernism" is not inappropriate. For the fact just stated, that Liberalism is the result of Modernist criticism of traditional theology, means that there is a *de facto* identity of Liberalism and Modernism; and in this work it is in the *de facto* relation that our interest lies. For we are examining extant systems, not ideal logical interrelations; so that if Liberalism and Modernism are currently coincident they can be considered as one whole, no matter to what vastly different positions they may eventually lead. Liberal Modernism becomes, then, a contemporary system; and we have to ask concerning it as we have done in the case of Evangelical Protestantism: What is its relation to the conception of Christianity and its mission as given in this book?

For the beginnings of Modernism we must go back at least as far as the end of the Middle Ages which witnessed a revolt against the medieval tendency to "treat knowledge as forming one seamless whole"[3] or to include within one authoritative system all phases of thought and belief. This revolt was aided to some extent by the Renaissance which tended to free the human spirit from the bonds of authority and to awaken the method of inquiry into first principles in every domain of the mind. The course of the Renaissance, however, was deflected by its own dominant interests; moreover, it was not until natural science and the method of historical criticism had been evolved that the means were at hand for effective exploration of the basis of accepted religious ideas. By that time medieval and scholastic dogmatism had been succeeded by a Protestant dogmatism that was even more rigid. Hence when modern theological criticism entered upon its systematic period in the age of the Enlightenment, it was toward the Protestant theological tradition even more than toward the Catholic that it directed its fire.

[3] Baillie, *The Interpretation of Religion* (Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 299.

For a while both the attack upon and the defence of religious dogma relied chiefly on rational instruments. Rationalist and intellectualist assumptions and principles were in the ascendant both within the church and without. But all this was changed by the romanticist revival which altered the course of the stream in literature and philosophy and gave rise equally to new currents and trends in religion. In the place of formal models, whether classical in literature or dogmatic in religion and philosophy, it gave primacy to the warmth and spontaneity of natural feeling. So that religion ceased to be seen as depending on the demonstrability of received doctrines or as being in peril if their finality was challenged. Its sanctions lay in the genuineness of religious feeling and immediate experience. Thus was born the modern interest in psychology of religion and in empiricism in theology.

This exaltation of religious emotion had effect first in highly influential practical religious movements, such as Pietism in Germany and Methodism in England. It became operative in theology, to the extent of determining the currents of modern theology, in the work and through the influence of romanticist religious thinkers, or thinkers who combine criticism and romanticism, of whom the chief is perhaps Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Schleiermacher held that the characteristic feature of human life, its real nature, has its seat in the affections; in them alone man experiences the totality of his personal self. He conceived religion, in accord with this, as pure affection or feeling; as such it is an original datum and not a derivative of philosophy or ethics. It is the primal reaction set up in the soul of man by the universe around him, and hence can be further characterized as a feeling of dependence. But the feeling of absolute dependence is the heart of the consciousness of God, so that for Schleiermacher experience of God is not the result of

reflection and action but arises at the level of the unified self before the division of faculties has become active. He then finds in man's experience of God the key to the understanding of God. In all this Schleiermacher achieves two things: first, by delivering religion from subjection to philosophy and ethics he draws attention to its autonomy and establishes its right to a place of its own in man's mental life; and second, his doctrine of the primacy of experience definitely provides a basis for Modernist criticism of theology which finds its criteria in the realities of religious faith and life rather than in creedal formulae. So that Schleiermacher is not incorrectly regarded as the father of the Liberal-Modernist theological movement; his influence has been a determining one especially on the modern theology of experience.

The successors of Schleiermacher have followed him in conceiving the validity of religion to be inherent, or in finding a religious *a priori* in man's own being, but they have differed from him and from one another in the special mental activity which they regard as the vehicle of religion. In Troeltsch, for example, the essence of religion is not feeling but intuitive reason; he discovers in reason a transcendent element which is met by the presence of the transcendent in the universe. For Otto, the religious *a priori* is an original, underived apprehension within the soul of what he calls the numinous, the Mysterious Reality (*Mysterium Tremendum*) in the universe which awakens awe. Through the efforts of these and others the right of religion to be tested by its own principles has gained wide recognition. They exhibit, perhaps at its best, the essential spirit of Modernism which seeks to characterize religion in terms of its own essence and rest its defence thereon, rather than conceiving it to stand or fall with concepts or ritual forms in which under the social and intellectual conditions of the moment its life may be expressed.

The foregoing is a general characterization of Liberal Modernism; in addition a word should be said about one or two special aspects. First, Modernism and Liberalism have been greatly influenced by historical criticism of the biblical records. Perhaps the chief effect is not the modification of accepted theories of the Bible or of inspiration so much as the change historico-critical study has wrought in the conception of Jesus. It has led to the effort to present him, stripped of all creedal embellishments, in his historic character in the setting of his actual human life. This has resulted in the picture of Jesus of the Liberal theologians which not only erased everything supernaturalistic, but, paradoxically, in what purported to reproduce a first-century figure as he actually was, portrayed him in a form that could more readily be domesticated in the nineteenth century than in his own. This picture was definitely reached, however, by modernistic analysis of earlier conceptions of Jesus, and it partly explains and even justifies the connection of Modernism with Liberalism to which we referred. It is fair to add that further criticism, equally according to Modernist standards, has brought to view other factors which have restored to Jesus his real historic proportions as a first-century Jew instead of a Victorian European, and justify the projection of him on the revolutionary scale in place of the merely idealistic.

A second particular phase of Liberal Modernism is one that it owes to the individualistic humanitarianism of which something was said in the previous chapter. We saw there that the essence of a true individualism is respect for the worth of the individual; and it is this element that has influenced Liberal Modernism in two ways. It bore fruit, first, in the Liberal doctrine of tolerance and of civil and religious freedom. But secondly, when it became evident that society in its present form could not insure freedom and

opportunity fairly and equally, it issued, on the basis of this same ideal of individual good, in a will towards reform and social change. It brought the Kingdom of God of the Christian tradition into conjunction with the Utopia of the sociological outlook, and so formed the social gospel which has been for more than a generation a part of the Liberal religious faith as well as a distinctly Modernist emphasis.

This, then, in barest outline is the theology of Liberal Modernism, both in its general and in certain particular features. We come now to the question of its appropriateness to the approach to the Christian task shared by the writers of this book. At first it would seem to be fully appropriate, for with what could members of a fellowship for a Christian social order have closer affinity than with the social gospel? This, however, would be a surface judgment. The gospel proclaimed by the fellowship may seem similar outwardly to the social gospel of the last three decades, but inwardly it differs essentially; and the difference is indicative of the general shortcomings of Modernism from the point of view of this work.

The social gospel, as already suggested, was Utopian and optimistic. Its co-ordinate was the idea of progress in the form in which it exerted a potent influence on the Liberal tradition. This idea had long been adumbrated: in Bacon's dreams of what science might accomplish for man, in Leibniz' theory of pre-established harmony which made the universe teleological, and in eighteenth-century romantic sentimentalism. But in the nineteenth century it reached the level of a dogma and became the faith not in progress as possible merely, but as inevitable. The principle of evolution helped this consummation, not only by showing that advance from stage to stage occurred automatically among natural events, but through the power it acquired over the whole of thought in being erected into a grandiose philos-

ophy by Spencer and others. Faith in progress induced in men the confidence that all their hopes would be realized through an increase that would come in the nature of things in light and sweetness and good will. This confidence animated alike the social gospel and the Liberal theology.

But the World War and the subsequent disorder and disillusionment shattered this mood and revealed to men a tragic strain in their predicament with which all their optimistic assumptions were incommensurable. A temper of realism was forced upon them in place of their romantic illusions, and they came to see that man's salvation would not come through gradual or continuous improvement, but would require some radical reversal of his concepts and habits. It is in the soil and atmosphere begotten of this trend that the Religious Radicalism represented by this book has taken root and is maturing. Its intellectual and psychological *milieu,* therefore, is very different from that of the pre-war social gospel. It seeks a more deep-going diagnosis of man's need, and for that reason is more inward and in a true sense more religious. For the social gospel, with its belief that by means already at work man could reach the good, was not impelled to the creation of new religious motives; it was activistic and the seekers after a sign flocked to it. The present radical gospel sees that man's redemption is unattainable without fundamental spiritual reorientations; it sees too that in man's present state and by reason of the unity of life these involve in their very beginnings the regeneration of the individual spirit and the re-creation of social life. Thus, as against the complacencies of Liberalism, Religious Radicalism would restore the essential deep-lying concerns of Evangelicalism but would go beyond it in bringing other factors that qualify man's life within the range of religion's redemptive action. In sum, Religious Radicalism is more comprehensive than Evangelicalism and far exceeds Liberal Modernism in inwardness and depth.

Modernist theology is being rejected to-day because its postulates appear to render it necessarily anthropocentric. Two basal influences determine this: the subjectivism stamped upon modern theology by Schleiermacher's attempt to derive the validation of theism from the God-consciousness, and the stimulus furnished to belief in divine immanence by the Hegelian deifying of the process of the world. These influences naturally converged in the thought that God is especially immanent in man. Anthropocentrism of this sort was an advantage when the drift of general sentiment was humanistic. But Humanism was proper to a time of prosperity and confidence in progress; in an age like ours, when man has acquired power but seems only to multiply calamity for himself by his use of it, the hope of Humanism in man's self-perfectibility is turning up its obverse in the despair of the futilitarians. And Modernist theology is sufficiently akin to Humanism to share its discomfiture; the breakdown of human self-sufficiency is equally critical for it. Reactions are occurring against Modernist theology, especially its subjectivistic and immanentist presuppositions that range all the way from a reasonable or realistic objectivism to the most extreme forms of absolute divine transcendence. We must glance briefly at the theologies that are emerging from these reactions to see if they have anything to contribute to the theological principles, pertinent to a radical presentation of Christianity of which we are in search.

III. Contemporary Trends

The decisive form of the reaction against Modernist immanentalism is Danish-Swiss in origin, being connected with the names of Kierkegaard, Barth and Brunner. Kierkegaard (1813–1855) attacked the philosophy of Hegel, especially where it taught men to see in the world the activity whereby God is continually revealed and fulfilled. He himself pic-

tured God and the world, the spheres of God and man, as disparate: "God is in heaven," he says, "man on earth. There is an infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity."[4] Barth sets Kierkegaard in his own ancestral line. He follows him fully in putting God and man apart; there is nothing in man, he teaches, that enables him to find or know God. Thus he rejects the assumption of a religious *a priori* in human nature and so reverses the whole trend in philosophy of religion and theology from Schleiermacher to Otto. Nor can God be approached or known through outer nature; he is Wholly Other than the order which nature and man constitute, absolute discontinuity or polarity lying between him and it. How, then, is any relationship established at all between man and God? Solely through his approach to us, not ours to him. "God moves toward man, man does not move toward God. . . . Man is sought and found, he does not seek and find."[5] God as Absolute comes to us in moral situations in life. His coming transforms the seeming relativity of our moral alternatives into a decisive parting of the ways. It brings man to the crisis, not of having to weigh or judge, but of obeying, or with all the consequences before him taking it upon himself to disobey, God's righteous demands.

In appraising Barthianism, while we would hesitate to go to the length of Barth's denial of any value to man's search for God or of any kinship of nature between man and God, yet we feel that he is expressing a timely protest against the tendency to make God a mere idealization of our own higher yearnings; a protest that will prove salutary enough if it helps toward a new apprehension of divine initiative and interposition in human affairs. This interposition occurs

[4] Quoted in Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans,* preface to second edition.

[5] Camfield, *Revelation and the Holy Spirit* (Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 19.

both in love and judgment. We may believe that God is visiting the world with judgment at the present time; and we shall not be far astray if we say in the language of Barth that God is doing this because men have disobeyed; he is calling them to forsake their disobedience. It may seem that his judgment does not discriminate between the more and the less deserving; it metes suffering to the victims of wrong as well as to its perpetrators. But this may mean that much of the suffering is vicarious, which only strengthens the reason for regarding it as of divine institution. For God interposes, we say, in love and judgment, and a judgment actuated by love will not be penal but re-creative and redemptive.

The Barthian term "crisis" well befits the present hour; Barth is right too in seeing the crisis to be of such a character as reflects not just a conjuncture of human and historical circumstances but the will of a holy God. "The self-determined civilization of the last centuries is disintegrating because it does not correspond to the divine order of things. . . . We are now in our difficult situation because the hand of God is upon us. We must be ready again to listen to the voice which calls to us: 'Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.'"[6]

A second contemporary tendency, serving the same ends as Barthianism but without its distrust of man's rational and other powers, is the movement in Catholic theology known as Neo-Thomism. This, as the name implies, is a return to St. Thomas Aquinas, but not in the sense of an authoritarian acceptance of all that St. Thomas taught; rather it looks to him for methods and principles in dealing with present-day theological problems. It is a reaction against the naturalistic predilections of modern philosophical theology which it traces to the shattering of the alliance, in

[6] Pauck in *The Church Against the World*, p. 24.

the age of the Renaissance and still more completely in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, between philosophy and religious faith. For religion had directed philosophy to the question of ultimate being; under its tutelage the impulse of philosophy to achieve a complete metaphysic was continually being renewed. But with the separation of philosophy and religion, metaphysics receded from the philosopher's horizon leaving him to become engrossed in the natural and positivistic aspects both of man and the world.

Philosophy became confused, in other words, with naturalistic science and its office was reduced to effecting a coherent formulation of the results of science. This involved the surrender of the constructive and speculative function of thought, and of the stimulus and meaning given to life by a rational world-view. According to Neo-Thomism, this surrender is having a fatal effect; it is causing men to acquiesce in a natural-material representation of their problem and to confine their good within the same orbit. Hence the great need, if man is to escape the indirection, the littlenesses and frustrations that always beset the attempt to live on the natural-material plane, is the recovery of the higher mental purview; and it is here St. Thomas offers guidance. For in him, truth-data gained from many sources are constituted into an objective rational system such as is not attained by simply collating the data. It entails the mind's creative activity which is carried on in the dimension of the essential being of reality and thought. It is this higher mental dimension that the modern world needs to have restored; for within it alone can it glimpse the meaning and end of man's life, and see the passing show over against its subsistent background or in relation to an underlying unity presented to our thought as ultimate.

To impenitent empiricists who hold that though their procedure may bring us to an impasse it is the only one we can

validate, Neo-Thomism will have little appeal. But to people who regard the heightened perspectives that come of belief in transcendent existence to be both possible and necessary, it will offer an alternative to the Barthian irrationalist projection of the divine order. For instead of bidding men abandon their intellectual vocation it purports to call them to recover it fully, especially in its nobler possibilities and affinities, and by venturing to the utmost by means of it to find it answered and completed by the self-revealing activity of God.

Neo-Thomism is a phase of contemporary realism. There is another phase that is theologically significant, and in the judgment of many people the theology derivable from it embodies all the values we have tried to discern in Barthianism and Neo-Thomism, but in simpler and less controvertible form. The approach to it lies by way of Whitehead's conception of God as the Principle of Concretion. The meaning of this term, stated as briefly as possible, is as follows: Nature or "the actual world is a process, and that process is the becoming of actual entities."[7] Each entity is unique, not only in possessing structure and qualities distinct from those of the stuff of which it is composed, but in that all other entities or occasions are uniquely concreted in it; or viewing the process from its side, it synthesizes or prehends the whole in its own unique way. The principle by which all being is thus gathered into each instance of it is the Principle of Concretion; so that God as this Principle is "the binding element in the world."[8] He is that by which all things come to unity and in doing so achieve novel meaning. He is that by which everything becomes actual, a definite this or that by which the world itself is an actual world. This becoming actual is the means whereby nature achieves advance; the

[7] *Process and Reality*, p. 33.
[8] *Religion in the Making*, p. 158.

advance lies in the attainment at each stage of its proper ends or ideals. God, as the element without which there would be no actuality, is the ground and "quality of this attainment; his purpose is embodied in the ideals relevant to the actual state of the world. . . . He confronts what is actual by what is possible for it." [9] This holds at the human level as at every other, so that for us God is the source of all possible good or that which enables the realization of good; or as Wieman represents it: "God is that feature of our total environment which most vitally affects the welfare of human life. . . . He is that in the universe which will yield maximum security and increase of good when lives are properly adjusted to him." [10]

In commenting on this concept it will suffice to note that while it does not picture God formally as Self-conscious Spirit, or attribute to him primordially foresight or conscious intention with respect to the course of the world, as traditional theology has been wont to do, yet neither does it reduce God to a projection of our subjective states. It represents him as objectively real, a feature of the world which is inescapable and which, if we trust to it, never fails to minister to our highest blessedness and yield fresh supplies of moral and spiritual power. But it can be argued that this is precisely what God has always meant experimentally when men have realized him, no matter what has been their mode of belief. Hence this conception of God embodies the indispensable religious values, but in an experientially identifiable form. It thus avoids the issues that divide and mystify men which other theological systems gratuitously raise, and it preserves in an unencumbered formulation what has always been most efficacious in bringing men into the essential religious experience.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[10] *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, pp. 14, 59.

IV. The Faith of Radical Christianity

We have already given hints, in outlining the traditional and the newer theological attitudes, of the help we may look for from each of them in our effort to reach a revolutionary theological principle, and of where each falls short. It now remains to bring these hints into a unity as a step toward giving this principle more systematic form.

It was said that Religious Radicalism will share the deep concerns of Evangelicalism but will extend their range. We may put this more specifically by saying that as Evangelicalism felt the reality of sin and saw no hope for men apart from their being brought under conviction of sin, so Radical Christianity will have a doctrine of sin that is no less emphatic, and its diagnosis of man's predicament will be in terms of sin. But it will re-classify human acts and differ from Evangelicalism both by inclusion and exclusion in what it categorizes as sinful. It will include whatever in disposition or conduct is unbrotherly, whatever sunders men or is contrary to love and loyalty. It will judge as sinful all acts and processes that yield affluence, or even sufficiency, to some while impoverishing others, or that cause power to be used in unreciprocal ways over the will and freedom of others. Radical Christianity will condemn as sin, in other words, much that hitherto we have flattered as success. This is one of the phases of its revolutionary quality.

Cognate to the doctrine of sin will be the call to repent and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. But again, Religious Radicalism will offer its own version of the occasions for repentance. It will lay on men their responsibility for the acts of a society of which they are a part, and it will bid them repent of all acts and conditions by which society sins against any of its members. The fruit of repentance will be the will to transform these conditions.

Thus to the sins to be repented of according to Evangelicalism, Radical Christianity will add others that are specially characteristic of our age and are the most devastating of all to amity and fellowship in our present organization of life.

Radical Christianity will not copy all the tenets of Barthianism; its doctrine of the disparity of God and man and of the form of obedience or submission due from man to God will seem to it less Christian than Mohammedan or Manichaean. But it will share its realism with respect to the plight of a world that has turned from God. It will agree that man has not the means to save himself but must look to forces in the universe and in history that are not his to command. The action of these forces, in an era like ours, may be catastrophic, events moving too swiftly for their triumph to come solely through gradual increase of good will and confidence. Thus the theology of Religious Radicalism will be eschatological; it will picture God as judging the world and taking sides. And this will dictate the strategy of a revolutionary Christianity, which will clearly include alignment with the forces God is using to accomplish the next stage in man's deliverance.

Among these forces, if we read the signs, is the awakening discontent and the demand for the essentials of a true human life of those peoples and classes to whom it has long been denied. Then Religious Radicalism will have the hope of eschatology as well as its judgment. It will give men a heaven to dream of through dramatizing the life of man as it will be when he has learnt that the purposes in which he becomes united with his fellows are those that make his own life meaningful, and when, in consequence of this, he has ceased to be acquisitive and covetous of power. Nor need one fear that this social or terrestrial consummation will displace the older eschatological teaching. In the Old Testament it was when communion with God became so real that

men felt a kinship between themselves and God's eternal nature that the hope of immortality was born.[11] So in our time men will have less scruple about extending God's graciousness into the hereafter when the circumstances of their lot are a more convincing witness that God is not altogether neglecting them here.

The conviction of Religious Radicalism that crisis and catastrophe, no less than continuous growth, belong to God's way in history will be a source of insight into the meaning of the cross; it may assist the recovery of long-lost elements of meaning that were present in Jesus' own mind. This recovery will lead to a new realization of the absolute relevancy of the cross, both as revealing how far God would go in redeeming man's life and as the sublime instance of the means on which Jesus relied for achieving his revolutionary ends. This instance will be decisive as to the means open to us in our part in the Christian revolution. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence," refers to the only sense in which this means "includes violence"; for essentially it is adventuring to the utmost at the dictation of love. Nor will this be the end of Radical Christianity's exaltation of Jesus. It will not be averse to whatever Christological ideas men find most satisfying, but it will insist that assent to these, or the converse adherence to the humanitarian or non-theological Jesus of Religious Liberalism, is no substitute for surrender to the inherent authority of Jesus as the embodiment of love's graciousness and of love's sovereignty. It is in this form that the church needs a revival of faith in the deity of Jesus; such as will persuade men that in the words, "Lay not up treasure on earth" and "Love your enemies," we have, not hyperbole to be adapted to what we find expedient, but authentic divine truth challenging not the vicious among us but the "wise and prudent" to trans-

[11] Ps. 16: 8–11.

value our ways. To heed this challenge would soon leave us in no doubt about Christianity's being revolutionary; to heed and practise would be to have our place in the Christian revolutionary ranks.

Finally, all the theologies above considered were in one mode or another theistic, and we do not doubt that theism will be the supreme strain in the theology of Religious Radicalism. No doubt Religious Radicals will hold different views of God, but they will agree in thinking of God as real, in the sense of being other than a reflex of their own states, and as being, in his help to men in their effort toward right and truth, absolutely sufficient and dependable. Such belief in God will be the inspiration of the Christian revolution. For this revolution seeks to end the strife and injustice that are contrary to the will of God, and to convert human society into a divine commonwealth of righteousness and love. Revolutionaries who have this goal are workers together with God.

GREGORY VLASTOS

III

THE ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

I. A Revolutionary Ethic

WHENEVER we read the Gospels with fresh and open mind, we cannot help being struck by the fact that they announce a new way of life. The Sermon on the Mount, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the story of the Rich Young Ruler, the sayings about the Strait Gate and Narrow Way, about finding one's life through losing it, about the first who are last and the great who serve — there is something stubborn about these things; they resist all attempts to tame them down and explain them away. They mock our conventional morality. Our ethical systems seem drab and unimaginative beside them. They leave us with a breathless sense of reality — the kind of reality whose sign is to expose, condemn and command. They shatter judgments whose weary familiarity had seemed to render them unshakeable. They initiate us into another world which we recognize at once as the real one, and from which nothing separates us any longer except our lethargy and cowardice. We have Hegel's doctrine that the moral philosopher should not attempt to frame new imperatives; he should merely

present the rationale of existing notions of duty and the institutions which embody them. We have also the saying of Marx: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world; the point, however, is to *change* it." The ethic of Jesus belongs in the second category. It is revolutionary in that radical sense. It is not meant to account for current valuations, but to cut the ground from under them, to undermine them, overturn them, and rear something very different in their place.

What is the point of incidence of this disturbing ethic on our established ways? It is obviously the command to love. But what is disturbing and revolutionary about that? Compare the Gospels with such a document of Greek morality as the *Republic,* and you will see. Plato gives us a scheme of morality which is also vastly different from the usual moralistic platitudes. He too condemns the world around him. He projects another plan of life which will bring reason in place of unreason and harmony instead of strife. His *Republic* breathes a proud, impatient hostility against the Athens of his own day. For the most part the thinker restrains himself and philosophizes without invective. But in the eighth and ninth books, when he has finished the theoretical argument, he allows himself a fling of satire that shows how bitter is his contempt for the existing disorder. Nevertheless, the total effect is *not* revolutionary. It would leave his Athenian reader intelligently disgusted with the latter days of Athenian democracy, but it would not give him any compulsion to act to realize the new Athens. The announcement of the new morality is visionary, not revolutionary. The new society is Utopian in the strict sense of that word: it is exactly nowhere; the question of its existence is not important. The only point at which it might impinge on the world of action is in the conduct of en-

lightened individuals.[1] "In heaven there is laid up a pattern of it, methinks, which he who desires may behold, and beholding, may set his own house in order. But whether such an one exists, or ever will exist in fact, is no matter; for he will live after the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other."[2]

It is just the opposite with the Gospels. The morality they enjoin is not something which would be ideally best at any time and practically relevant for no particular time. It is meant for the immediate present. It is not a speculative rightness that recommends it, but an historical fitness. "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent." The matter is a pressing one. No one knows the exact hour of the Kingdom's arrival. But this only means constant watchfulness, preparedness, expectancy. Act now, decide now, while it is yet time; a little later may be too late. There is an urgency about the ethic of love because it is simply the way of making ready for the imminent Kingdom. When the lawyer had the good sense to grasp the primacy of love for God and man over all other commandments, Jesus did not praise him for his intellectual penetration. What he said was, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."[3] Plato could never have put into the mouth of Socrates the rejoinder, "Thou art not far from the *Ideal Polis*." That is why Jesus' criticism of the institutions of

[1] I am not forgetting that Plato is never content with the reformation of the individual in an unregenerate society. His enlightened man who succeeds in living a sheltered righteousness amid general depravity will have done "a great work; but not the greatest, unless he find a State suitable to him" (*Republic,* 496e, 497a. Jowett's translation). Though this admission is central to Plato's scheme of the good life, yet his social philosophy makes no attempt to implement the arrival of this necessary state. Awaiting the arrival of the philosopher-king is hardly a serious proposal; no convincing reason is offered why any actual king would turn to philosophy.

[2] *Ibid.,* 592b.

[3] Mark 12:34.

his day bites, whereas Plato's does not. The proposed alternative is not a pattern in heaven but an impending crisis, a Kingdom which, since the days of John the Baptist, is being invaded by violent men.

Plato writes the *Republic* as an aristocrat for aristocrats. His ideal state is divided into classes. It is not a caste system, since class membership is not a matter of birth or wealth but of intellectual proficiency, determined by the individual's ability to survive successive tests in education. A long period of training and apprenticeship sifts out the best minds. These become automatically the state officials. They make all the decisions for the common life. The rest of the population obeys. For the Socratic tradition, which identifies wisdom and virtue, this is an exceedingly important matter. It means that the great majority of the population are excluded from the essential condition of the good life: enlightened self-determination. Yet Plato does not seem to have any sense of moral discomfort about the matter. He is simply not concerned with this group. He discusses earnestly the conditions of life for the upper classes: family, property, education. The rest he simply ignores. He refers to them as " the others " — a term which Jowett charitably translates, " the lower classes." About all that we are told of them is that they exist, they do the work; and that promotions from or demotions to that class may take place in the course of training. All the other questions about their lot are not even raised. The author is obviously not interested in them.

Jesus, on the other hand, stands in a tradition whose chief concern was for the common people. The lot of the poor, the needy, the widow, the orphan forms the dominant theme of prophetic morality. From the first the prophets stand as champions of the weak against the strong, of Uriah the Hittite against David the King, of Naboth the Jezreelite

against Ahab the King, of the oppressed and nameless against the "ancients of the people." "What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of Hosts."[4] The reference is to "*my* [God's] people"; to those whose share in the good life is fully as important as that of any member of privileged groups; not to a regrettable necessity that is at most an object for dutiful charity.

As time goes on, and the security of the national life is shaken, a new note enters the prophetic concern for the oppressed. They no longer appeal for justice to the oppressors. They look for a divine deliverance in the "acceptable year of the Lord," which becomes formulated with increasing clarity as the Messianic Kingdom. The poor of Athens could hardly anticipate the coming of Plato's Republic with any enthusiasm. The very thought of the Athenian proletariat concerning themselves with the charming speculations of the Academy carries with it an air of incongruity. The *Republic* was not meant for them, and was not addressed to them. Yet the Jewish Messianic Kingdom was addressed to hardly any one except the downtrodden. To the mighty, the rich, to those who are full, those who laugh now — to use the phraseology of the New Testament — the prospect of this new Kingdom brings the unpleasant thought that they might lose their present (comfortable) seats. It is the "others" to whom it comes as consolation and hope: the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the bruised, who can look forward with unmixed welcome, with positive joy, to the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of their God.

Jesus accepts this prophetic heritage and carries it forward in three ways: First, he identifies himself completely with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the

[4] Isa. 3:15.

prisoner. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."[5]

Second, he states clearly the moral law of true egalitarianism and true distinction in the coming Kingdom. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."[6] This is not a question of spiritual levelling. Neither is it a simple turning of the tables, giving the places of the rich to the poor. It is rather a matter of defining carefully a new principle of greatness, which cuts across established valuations and is open to all alike, rich and poor. It is the greatness of the servant, radically different from the exclusiveness of gentile overlordship.[7]

Third, Jesus gives a new principle which creates a new man and a new fellowship, whose results are so far-reaching as to be likened to a second birth. It is the principle of finding life through losing it. To find life is not an individualistic matter. It is to be fit for the Kingdom. And that fitness is the only thing that matters. Everything else sinks into insignificance beside it. To gain the whole world and forfeit that is profitless. Pluck out your right eye, cut off your right hand, sell all that you have and give it away — do anything rather than risk the loss of that one thing needful. Where life hangs in the balance any sacrifice is cheap. And what is the way to find life? It is to love, to discover the fact of mutuality and dedicate yourself completely to its service. That dedication will expose the barriers which now divide rich from poor, Pharisee from Amhaarets (the people of the land), priest and Levite from the wounded man, the Jew from the Samaritan. It will show how these barriers prevent the development of the mutuality wherein life consists. It will unite also the dedicated into a fellowship which is stronger than the ties of blood: "Whosoever shall do the

[5] Matt. 25:40. [6] Mark 10:31.
[7] Mark 10:42–45.

will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." [8]

What is disturbing and revolutionary about the command to love is its challenge to a new way of living which begins immediately, destroys all class divisions, creates a new fellowship, and is ready for the Kingdom of God. Its greatest enemies are those who deny and oppose this new way — also in the name of love. They are the scribes and Pharisees who teach the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and make this an apology for the established inequalities of class. Religion, which is life and creates life, becomes a skeleton of ceremonial. The tombs of the prophets are garnished and the voice of prophecy is silenced. This is hypocrisy: the appearance of love serving the reality of division. It is conservatism with a religious sanction. Between that and revolutionary love there can be no peace. Jesus accepted the challenge and paid for it with the cross.

II. Material and Spiritual Values

The peril of hypocrisy trails the ethic of love in every age. I know of only one way to avoid it: to dig down to its material foundations and make sure that we are building our spiritual edifice on material rock. Insincerity denotes an unreal feeling, motive, intention — an unreal state of consciousness. But no state of consciousness is unreal in and of itself. All states of consciousness are equally real — hallucination is as real as veridical perception. It is only when we compare the state of consciousness with its intended material fact that we can test its veracity or deceptiveness, its sincerity or insincerity. This is pre-eminently true of love. There is, of course, such a thing as a feeling of love. But to define love as a feeling is a blanket invitation

[8] Mark 3:33.

to sentimentalism of every kind. It allows no test between false love and true love — between possessive, domineering love and mutual, free, equal love; between self-intoxication and reciprocal respect; between benevolent parasitism and comradeship.

Take, for example, such a definition of love as that given by Hegel: "Love is the consciousness of unity of myself with another."[9] Innocent as this may seem it opens wide the door to moral bullying. It leaves me free to impose my own ideas, my own preferences, on those I love: I am only treating them as I would treat myself. This is exactly what Hegel proceeds to do. Having made his definition of love the foundation of the family, he can then use it to rationalize one of the atrocities of the legal system of his day: the denial of civil rights to married women. Since man and wife love each other, he can argue, they are now one; their separate persons have been merged into a corporate person; and it is quite proper that one of them, the husband, should be the bearer of that personality; the wife loses nothing, since she loves her husband and is conscious of her unity with him. Thus the wife's love for her husband is made the basis of her economic subjection.

The only clear alternative is to deny that love can be defined as consciousness of unity. There are two kinds of unity: the one-sided unity, in which one party annexes the other and dominates it; and the mutual unity, in which both co-operate for common ends. Consciousness of unity may exist in both cases. It is therefore worthless as a definition of love. To mark off the illusion of unity from the actual at-oneness of common interests we must introduce a material factor into our definition: co-operation. Co-operation means participation in the same material process in such a way as to satisfy common interests. I have my in-

[9] *Philosophy of Right.* English translation by Dyde, p. 164.

terest, A. You have your interest, B. We both recognize that a given material process, which requires our joint activity, will satisfy both A and B. The sense of love is genuine when it refers to that co-operative community in which my labour is necessary to your interest and your labour to mine. The fact of love is not the consciousness of love, any more than the fact of life is the consciousness of life. If love exists at all, it exists as a material activity: the material interaction of separate beings recognizing each other's interests and seeking common fulfillment. The spiritual meaning of love is only the felt meaningfulness of this "brute," material fact, directing co-operation, anticipating its further development, celebrating its present reality. Love does modify my consciousness. It adds a new dimension to my enjoyment with the sense of the other's concurrent fulfillment. But it modifies my behaviour just as much. I no longer act alone but for and with another. If it modifies my consciousness without modifying my activity, it is not love but hypocrisy in one of its many forms.

We can now define not only sentimentalism, but also its correlative, materialism. Whenever a spiritual value is enjoyed in disregard of the context of co-operative community, the result is sentimentalism. Whenever a material value is pursued in disregard of the same context of co-operative community, the result is materialism. Since all human value has its material and spiritual sides — physical activity and conscious meaning — materialism and sentimentalism will flourish together. Wherever we see the one, we may expect the other. Let me suggest an example:

A rich harvest is a material thing. But concern for it is not materialism. It becomes materialism when its owner detaches that harvest from the co-operative labour that produced it and from the community of interests that it could serve, and says to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods

laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." The rich fool is a materialist "because he layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." He does not see his overflowing barns as instruments in the growth of mutuality. He sees them only as instruments to his own exclusive security. His materialism consists in his thinking only of himself. Yet he does not live by himself. He is a member of society. He is anxious to retain the respect and good will of that society. He refuses to find this on the material level. There he prefers exclusiveness to community. So he must seek community on another level and pretend that material community is not important. Just because he will not share material things he will overemphasize the spiritual things which can be shared painlessly. He will wax eloquent over the greatness of the chosen people, the splendid memories of Abraham, Moses and David, the moral grandeur of the prophetic heritage. These things, unlike his grain, are free to all; they are common to all without cost to himself. These are the things, therefore, through which he will seek to establish the sense of community. His pietism and nationalism will be sentimental because they are divorced from the facts of economic life. They will be also hypocritical in a more subtle sense than that of the popular understanding of that word: they are a screen, a camouflage set up within his own consciousness to obscure from others and from himself the frustration of a more basic community.

One can only hint at the revolutionary consequences of such a conception for our civilization. We are constantly told that Western technology is essentially materialistic; that it multiplies material goods and thus diverts our minds from the spiritual values. Nothing could be more completely false and sentimental than such an indictment of the machine. So far from being inherently materialistic, the machine is, with the one exception of language, the greatest instrument of

co-operative community that men have yet discovered. It binds men in ever closer interdependence and forces them to work together or be destroyed. There is nothing wrong with its multiplication of goods. The more material goods, the better. The only questions are how those goods are produced and how they are distributed. Who directs the machine? Is it the community or private owners responsible to no one but themselves? There is no materialism about increased power to supply the material needs of the community. The materialism lies in the increased power to make profits for a few individuals at the expense of overworked, underpaid labour and a growing army of unemployed. The materialism of the West is not its technology, but the use of that technology in such a way as to create class divisions and class conflict. The sentimentalities of modern culture — Hollywood, the Quintuplets, Edgar Guest, super-patriotism, Grundyism, religious emotionalism, spiritualism — are so many escapes from the insecurity and meaninglessness of life under capitalism. Triviality of sentiment and shallowness of imagination, rose-coloured romanticism and Pharisaic morality, are all symptoms of the mentality of escape. When the whole capitalist system is threatened with collapse, more feverish methods of escape must be employed. In fascist countries this reaches the proportions of mass hysteria and neurosis. It is no accident that anti-Semitism — a form of Western sentimentalism whose viciousness speaks for itself — is raised to fever pitch in Germany and has practically disappeared in Soviet Russia.

The first maxim of the ethic of love, therefore, is concern for material values. Without material values there can be varieties of conscious experience, but no co-operation; without co-operation there can be no community, no genuine love. The test of our sincerity in the pursuit of spiritual values will come back to the question: How seriously do we take

their material conditions? Any one who claims that his regard for spiritual things is so great that he has no time for material values is a sentimentalist and a materialist. Any one who tells us that religion must concentrate on spiritual values and have nothing to say about the material means of realizing those values is a sentimentalist and a materialist. It may be objected: Did not Jesus warn his disciples against laying up treasures on earth? The answer is that this very warning shows that Jesus did recognize the moral importance of material values. They are an index to one's loyalty, far more reliable than one's professions. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." That is why he raised the point of material possessions with the rich young ruler who had asked the purely spiritual question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" In the story of the Good Samaritan the definition of the neighbour is given in material terms. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but meat and drink have spiritual meaning. The Kingdom of God will come only when the meat and drink of common men can be a sacrament of love.

III. Personality and Community

Current interpretations of the Christian ethic are wont to settle the importance (or, rather, unimportance) of material values by appealing to one of the comforting doctrines of modern liberalism: the supreme worth of human personality. They proceed upon the contrast of supremely worthless matter with supremely worthy spirits. Even radical denunciations of modern society often start from that premise. Readers accustomed to this approach will wonder whether the omission of any reference to personality from the preceding discussion has been deliberate. They will be troubled by the formulation of love which has been offered.

Does it not subordinate the person to the community? And is not this the key fallacy of the social interpretation of the Christian ethic — to put the reconstruction of society before the salvation of the individual? Does not this defeat its own intention? What shall it profit a man if he gain the co-operative community and lose his own soul?

It would be easy — too easy — to reassure the reader that a belittlement of human personality is very far indeed from the writer's mind. But this would hardly meet the objection. It raises issues which cut deep into modern thinking and practice. To answer it we must consider at some length the status of personality in the ethic of love.

Let us begin with some elementary distinctions: between individuality and society, on the one hand; between personality and community, on the other. Human life is human relatedness. No one lives alone. Robinson Crusoe is a feat of literary imagination. We can think of an individual only by an effort of abstraction in which we leave aside for the moment the fact of his relatedness to other individuals. Likewise, we can make that effort in the opposite direction and think of the relationships apart from the individuals whom they relate. We thus derive a second abstraction, society. When we use that word we are not specifying the type of relation which characterizes it. Community does just that. It refers to the co-operative society — or to the co-operative aspects of any given society. The term "person" refers likewise to a special type of individual: the individual who is a member of co-operative relations. This definition of personality may strike the reader as wide of the mark. It may seem irrelevant to the real fact of personality. But he had better suspend judgment till he has had time to consider some of its implications.

Let us imagine that we have a human individual, living in society but not a member of any truly mutual relationships

— not a member of a co-operative community. Such an individual would be treated by others simply as a means, never as an end. Others would use him as they use a mechanical tool, to get out of him what they can without consideration of the fact that he too is a human being and has therefore ends of his own. He would have no rights and no duties, no guarantee of freedom and no claim of equality. He would be not a person but a human thing — a living instrument, as Aristotle described the slave of his own day. Whatever we may think of Aristotle's shameless rationalization of a vicious institution — he is no worse in this respect than a good many other intellectuals — we must at least admit that what he says is pretty true to the facts. The slave was a piece of property, a commodity that could be bought and sold. He had no will of his own, no freedom and no responsibility. He was an annex to the master's will. The master was responsible for his actions, just as a man to-day is held responsible for the behaviour of his dog. To that extent the slave was not a person, except potentially. Were it not for his relations to the community of slaves he would have no actual personality whatever.

When Christianity declared that "in Christ there is neither bond nor free," it abolished once for all the conception of human thinghood. But this would have been nothing more than a pious wish, except for the fact that the recognition of the slave's soul was implemented by a new, equal relationship. "In Christ" was the basis of a new relation, a religious community. It was the admission of the slave to that community which made him a person. He became a person when he was treated as one. When Paul spoke of "my son Onesimus," and urged his owner, Philemon, to receive him "not now as a *doulos,* but above a *doulos,* a brother beloved," he did make personality possible for the slave. But in so far as Onesimus still remained a slave, still

without personal status for civil society, his personality was a restricted, mutilated one — pious declarations to the contrary notwithstanding.

Individualism has never recognized this simple fact. It has thought of personality as "natural" and "inalienable," as given once for all in the mere fact of individual consciousness. It has missed, therefore, its dependence on the community. It has never seen that the problem of personality is essentially a social problem: that of developing the kind of social relations within which men can be persons. It has stressed only half of that problem: that of emancipating the individual from burdensome social restrictions. It has failed to see the other half: that this emancipation can take place only through social means and for social ends; that to liberate personality we must construct a community. Let me suggest an example:

A worker tells a group of fellow workers: "We haven't got a personality unless we organize." What she says is obvious to the gathering, though it might need explaining to a middle class audience. At the factory they are hardly more than adjuncts to the machine. They punch the clock, do as they are told, and collect their ten or twelve dollars at the end of the week. Conditions of work may be "good" or "bad." They must take them as they find them. If they don't like them they can look elsewhere. They are only replaceable cogs. They must find their personality, if at all, outside their place of employment. But poverty cuts them off from those very associations within which personality might come into its own: club or church, political or cultural associations. The key to all these things is economic: money and the things it can add to appearance, release from worry, independence from a confining and degrading environment. Whichever way they look their personality is thwarted, and they are not helped very much by being

informed of the supreme worth of human personality. Their only immediate chance to realize a measure of that supremely worthful fact is to organize. In the labour union they can meet on a basis of equality, co-operating for common ends. There they will find themselves in a position to press for a greater share in those material advantages which are the conditions of the spiritual values of personality. The necessities of group action will force new duties upon them; but these duties are the price of their rights, the price of their newly-won personality.

The individualist thus confuses the individual with the person. He fails to recognize the extent to which a man may be effectively deprived of personality if denied equal status in significant relations. The absolutist, on the other hand, errs in an equal and opposite direction. He confuses society with community. Society is the existing state of affairs, with its conflict, its exploitation, its limited mutuality. Community is the ethical ideal: the relation of co-operative endeavour and shared interests, only partially realized in any given society. Society as we have known it reeks with inequalities. Community is based on equality: the interests of each participant have equal claim to the consideration of all. Where this kind of equality ends, there exploitation begins.

In a genuine community I feel an organic relation between my interest and the interests of the other members. Their satisfaction is not identical with mine but complementary to it. I would not have what I wish, I would not be even wishing what I wish, unless others joined with me in a co-operative effort which satisfies common wants. The sense of this common fulfillment adds to my enjoyment. There is a security and heartiness in the experience of common satisfaction in comparison with which the joys of exclusive success are slippery and thin. This is what John Dewey has described as "shared meanings" or "shared values." In-

dividualistic critics have accused this conception of being "mystical." Mystical it no doubt is — in the only sense in which mysticism is a valid and necessary experience: the discovery that one's private values are undergirded and determined by a structure which far transcends the limits of one's individual self.

Consider now the totalitarian's travesty of this fact when he identifies this ideal community with the actual disunities of Hegel's Prussia or Hitler's Germany. He points to the indubitable fact of social relatedness and insists justly that apart from the social organism there could be no such thing as individual personality. But not every kind of social organism facilitates the development of individual personality. There are plenty of social organisms which seem specially fitted to crush out the personalities of most of their members for the sake of securing exclusive material advantages to a leisure class. The fascist disregards this material inequality. Personality, he thinks, is a spiritual fact; it has nothing to do with material facts. To achieve personality, he declares, one must transcend the material facts of his physical body, economic status, etc., and identify himself with the Spirit of the nation. He can thus affirm "the immutable, beneficial and fruitful inequality of mankind," [10] and still maintain that personality is open to every one on equal terms: every one can participate in the mystic unity of the whole. We are thus back to sentimentalism and materialism: making a spiritual unity a substitute for material unity. We are asking the underpaid labourer to find his personality in a mystical participation in the spirit of the whole, notwithstanding the fact that this whole exploits him. We are offering him an ideal personality based on emotional states of consciousness, instead of a real personality based on material facts of co-operative community. This is obviously senti-

[10] Quoted from Mussolini in Finer's *Mussolini's Italy*, p. 209.

mental: patriotic emotion keeping a respectful distance from economic facts. It is just as surely materialistic: mystical ardors resign him to continued exploitation.

The fascist subordinates the person to society; the individualist subordinates the community to the individual. Both lead through devious paths to sentimentalism and materialism, to a disregard of the material foundations of personality and community. Both open the door to the exploitation of one individual by another — that is, to the frustration of personality. The individualist does this on the basis of his high regard for individuality: to protect the weak we should have to restrain the powerful, and that restriction runs contrary to his doctrine of individual freedom. He neglects the difference between individual freedom and personal freedom, and apparently has never realized that you cannot achieve the latter without restricting the former. The fascist, on the other hand, sanctifies prematurely the existing order of society. He calls for individual self-sacrifice to the state, which he persistently confuses with the community. What he is really calling for is the sacrifice of some individuals (at the bottom) to other individuals (at the top).

The ethic of love denounces such hypocrisy. It asks of the individual to defend his personal rights in order to preserve the integrity of the measure of political community that society has thus far achieved. To abandon my rights as a person is to betray my loyalty to the community. Yet the individualistic interpretation of self-interest, and its enshrinement of the profit motive, is equally false. Self-interest is sacred to the community only when it is the claim of its members for equal consideration; the claim of persons whose self-respect is respect for the community. Against irresponsible and predatory self-interest the community has the right and the duty to defend itself. To safeguard co-operation it must place strict limits on individual profit-making.

Thus the ethic of love is the ethic of the co-operative community. And just because it is that, it is also the ethic of the free and equal personality. The two ideas, community and personality, are strictly correlative. Personality is "supreme" over the Sabbath and any other institution that falls short of community. But it would be nonsense to say that personality is "supreme" over the community. Society was made for personality, not personality for society. But it is just as important to remember that the individual was made for community, not community for the individual. The Christian ethic of love is neither an individual ethic alone, nor a social ethic alone. It is bi-polar. To forget one pole is to sacrifice the other. Jesus addressed himself to individuals for personal discipleship: Follow me. Yet he preached the Kingdom of God. It was he who asked, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Yet, as the context clearly shows,[11] the saving or losing of the individual soul is a social matter: inclusion in the coming Kingdom, or exclusion from it. This is the ultimate truth of finding life through losing it: One can achieve personality only by disciplining one's individuality in the co-operative community of love.

IV. God and Revolution

A moral discussion is inconclusive, and even trivial, if it leaves out the question of its application. From the standpoint of action this is the most important question of all. Yet most of the classical moralists never raise it. They exhibit norms of conduct undisturbed by the thought that as far as the East is from the West, so far are these norms from the actual behaviour of mankind. Instead of feeling such a reflection as a reproach, they have themselves insisted on the irrelevance of existential fact to the forms of moral right-

[11] Mark 8:35–38.

ness. Kant states this with uncompromising clarity. His moral law requires no empirical fact for its formulation, no psychological motive for its operation, no given social environment for its validity. It is an unconditional "ought" that must be obeyed quite apart from history, psychology or economics. Plato did not go to such lengths. Yet his "pattern in heaven" is a more delicate version of the same assumption. Rarely do we find a man like Hobbes, who comes to ethics with the bias of the unregenerate realist and gives in his moral theory an account of human nature at its egoistic worst. The procedure is very refreshing, but, unfortunately, morality disappears in the result. We seem to be left with a dilemma: either we shall state what ought to be, or else we shall describe what is. If we do the first, we have no assurance that our theories will connect with human practice; we are left in the mood of exhortation and scolding which has earned for moralists such a disagreeable reputation. If we do the second, we are accused of selling our birthright of ethics for a pottage of psychology and sociology.

It is right here, I think, that the religious approach to ethics makes its distinctive contribution. For religion cannot tolerate the chasm between essence and existence, between ideal rightness and existential realization. It conceives its Object in moral terms, and is also supremely concerned with the living reality of that Object. The holy God is the living God. God is not the sum of men's moral ideals. He is the patterned ground of value in the world itself. He is the structure of reality which men must discover and express in their ideas, in order to conform to it in their actions. Moral idealism is the last refuge of anthropomorphism. God is not the Ideal. The Ideal is a partial, fleeting glimpse of God that needs correction, supplementation, revision. It may need to be discarded completely after its work is done for a more authentic, contemporary vision. The first prin-

ciple of true religion is God's holiness, God's otherness, God's distance from man's ideas and ideals, God's refusal to be comprised within the circle of human consciousness. God's objectivity is his reality in the world of fact. His transcendence of morality is his immanence in history. He manifests his reality by breaking in upon our world of consciousness, resisting our wishes, reversing our judgments.

That is why religion has provided both the best and the worst of the moral teaching of mankind. At its worst, religion is idolatry. It identifies its beliefs, sentiments, institutions with the living God, and worships itself as God. The moral maxim of this idolatry is, Whatever is, is right. Speaking through the mouthpiece of a privileged church it rewards the source of its temporal benefits with eternal sanction. It finds ways of rationalizing existing practices and invents divine reasons for human cupidity and predation. Witness St. Augustine's improvement on Aristotle's apology for slavery: If the slave is a bad man, then God is punishing him for former sin; if he is good, then God is testing his patience. If the slave-owner is a good man, God is rewarding him for his life of virtue; if he is evil, he is being exposed to the further temptation of pride. In any case, equality and freedom are things of the spirit. They can never be fully realized except for a world of spirits in the life to come. In this, and in many other cases, religion has fallen far below the enlightened conscience of the times. Just because it recognized the fallibility of the moral judgments of sinful men it has been freer to sanction compromise and wink at cruelty and fraud. Pouring contempt on " the filthy rags of righteousness " it has justified practical necessities with shocking disregard for ethical decency. Needless to say, it has never been guilty of moral nudism. There were always moral garments for pious immorality.

There is something distinctly unpleasant about the spec-

tacle of a religious institution devouring widows' houses. Yet one must study the excellent motives which actuated the devourers — concern for the widows' souls, God's honour, the solvency of the church, etc. Else one will never understand why all revolutions must begin with religion, and why the impulse for the revolution in religion must come from religion itself. The damning word, "hypocrites," was spoken against the scribes and Pharisees by one who, like them, believed that the judgments of God are mightier than the judgments of men. But, unlike them, he saw God the destroyer, who will not leave stone upon stone from all the pompous magnificence of the established order; God the revealer, who hides truth from the wise, and reveals it to those whose labour and ignorance is the price of the others' leisure and learning; God of the righteous Kingdom, who will cast down the mighty from their seats and call the meek to inherit the earth. The scribes and Pharisees could have made their peace with Plato and Kant at any time. They could have made their peace with the Jesus of a previous time. But they could never make peace with one who, like them, declared the word of God for their own time. He opened the gates of the Kingdom to the poor, he seemed to close them to the rich. He saw the publicans and sinners preceding the religious respectables into the Kingdom of love. He saw the Samaritan practising the great commandment of the law, when the priest and the Levite passed by on the other side. He saw the Kingdom of God, and they saw the Kingdom of God; and his Kingdom was the negation of theirs.

Such an irreconcilable conflict is the meaning of revolution. It begins in religion because religion is the realm of absolute loyalty, of irrevocable choice. The necessity for choice arises when it becomes plain that a human order of value — a particular order of ideas, intuitions and senti-

ments, as well as of practices and institutions — is beginning to cut across the divine order of value. A product of history is cutting across the grain of historic creativity.[12] A creature of God, estranged from the creator and from its own true nature, sets itself against the creator's will, and whispers to itself: I shall be God. There can be no doubt about the result. It will be destroyed. It cannot be redeemed, unless its old nature be broken. It cannot live, unless its rebellious isolation be ended, unless it be buried deep again in the soil of divine creativity. Revolution is God-made, not man-made. It is the relentless pressure of a structured order that cannot tolerate an incompatible fragment. Man cannot make it, but man can choose it. He can remain in stubborn blindness with the old, prolong its death pangs, and add one or more victims to its fall. Or he can read the signs of the times and cast his lot with the upsurge of the new creative forces.

The final note of the Christian ethic of love in its relevance for our times must be the old reminder: Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. The ethic of love is not a matter for further exhortation, for frantic appeals for men to exert themselves and change either their own nature or the nature of the world in which they live. It is a quiet reminder that God is love; that man is made for love and cannot live without it; that the process of human development is necessarily a progressive discipline of interdependence and co-operation; that the present crisis is the tension between a lingering divisive society of economic classes and new possibilities of co-operative community in a classless society; that the issue of that crisis may be retarded by politicians, financiers, industrialists and would-be

[12] The phrase is, at least partly, John Macmurray's. So is the idea of the whole paragraph. The first and last sections of this chapter were written under the influence of his lectures at a seminar of the Canadian Student Christian Movement, at Albert College, Belleville, this June.

prophets of social justice, but cannot ultimately rest in their hands; that it can be decided only by the silent, irresistible judgments of the God of Wrath who is also the God of Love. The Christian ethic of love does not counsel a revolution. It announces it. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel.

R. B. Y. SCOTT

IV

THE BIBLICAL BASIS

WHY should we seek a biblical basis for Christian social reconstruction? Not, certainly, because we may expect to find blueprints of the New Jerusalem, wanting only the technical skill of builders to set it up. We shall search the pages of the Bible in vain for a plan and a program, for the Bible is not that kind of book.

What, then, is the Bible? It is the classic literature of a religion that is rooted in history. Christianity is more than the Bible, but the Bible is the anchor that keeps it from drifting to an alien shore. It enshrines the faith, the dominant motive forces and characteristic ideals of the creative period of Christianity's foundation, and so provides a norm by which may be tested what men take for the guidance of the Spirit. The Scriptures have moral authority for Christians as the literary deposit of that historic religious phenomenon of which the life and teaching of Jesus are the vital centre and the experience of Israel is the spiritual background.

We must ask, then, as we confront our social problem, what are the terms of this moral authority if there are no plans and specifications for the society that is to be. Some will go so far as to say that it is enough to have this inspir-

ing record of men of faith and vision, into whose experience of God we too may enter and find, now as then, that the spirit will lead us to the truth. For the rest, we must face our own problems. The Bible provides no code for the modern world.

There is a middle position, however, which is considerably nearer to the truth. While there are, indeed, no blueprints, certain normative principles of social life emerge from the study of the Old and New Testaments, which clearly are fundamental to the religion there portrayed. The religion of the Mosaic tradition, expounded and clarified by the prophets and culminating in Jesus' gospel of the Kingdom, is a religion of persons-in-community. It presupposes a definite kind of social structure, a system of human relationships ethically conditioned by the moral attributes of the community's God. It is not an other-worldly religion, but concerns itself in a frankly realistic manner with the way men live together here and now.

We may expect to find, therefore, and do find, clear indications of a religious norm of personal character, as, for instance, in St. Paul's catalogue of the Christian virtues in Galatians 5:22, 23, and the equally familiar summary of the divine requirements in Micah 6:8. But there are also to be found the main outlines and underlying principles of a form of human society corresponding to these ideals of personal life and essential to their realization on any general scale. Though the Bible is an ancient oriental book,[1] written mostly within the confines of a small and relatively simple community, and though its writers could know nothing of the problems peculiar to the machine age, their insights are not thereby invalidated. They were dealing with human beings

[1] It is, of course, a select library rather than a single book and comes from numerous writers, many of whom are anonymous, and whose work covers a period of a thousand years.

in relationship to one another and to the political and economic institutions of the time, and, in principle, the meaning of religion for these relationships has not changed. Certain germinal ideas can be distilled from their ancient oriental form of expression and put into modern terms.

The resulting principles of a Christian social order are not, however, simply to be identified with "the Kingdom, come on earth." "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink,"[2] nor yet a particular social economy by which meat and drink are provided, even on a basis of justice. It is something deeper and more inclusive, pertaining to men and women as persons rather than as economic units and relating them to one another in a way that also relates them to God. But these principles of social relationship, though not by any means identical with the Kingdom, are nevertheless to be inferred from it and recognized as prerequisite to its concrete and actual establishment.

We may turn, then, to the Old and New Testaments for guidance as to the practical implications of our religion for social life. The Old Testament is included with the New because the latter is the fruition of what went before[3] and cannot be understood apart from it. This will be evident as we proceed to examine the basic conceptions of God, Man and Community.

I. The God of the Old Testament

In the Eighth Psalm a question is pondered which raises ultimate issues for Hebrew thought: "What is man, that *Thou* art mindful of him?"[4] God is never argued, in the Scriptures; his being, and his activity in the affairs of men, are regarded as self-evident. It is his moral nature and his claims upon his people that gradually, and at last emphati-

[2] Rom. 14:17. [3] Matt. 5:17. [4] Ps. 8:4.

cally, are distinguished as his supreme characteristics. Nature and history, the spirit of man and the common life of the "covenant people" are, in the Old Testament, the primary arenas of the divine activity. The unity of the divine, in contrast to the "gods many and lords many" of the nations,[5] the essential spirituality [6] of God, conceived in terms of an active personal will, are fundamental to the central biblical tradition.

In primitive Semitic religion divinity was a mysterious, non-human power located in natural objects such as evergreen trees, springs, rocks and heights. There are animistic survivals in later Hebrew religion,[7] and the early idea of God as power appears in the ascription of storm and earthquake [8] to the direct activity of Yahweh [9] and of abnormal human behaviour to possession by Yahweh's spirit.[10] Even the prophetic teaching that Yahweh is Lord of nature and of history is but a refinement of the original idea.

A second element common in general to Semitic religion is the mutual dependence of the tribe or people and its god, with whom it stands in a relationship of actual or ideal kinship. Israel had a special tradition as to how her relationship with Yahweh came to be established. It was connected with a definite historical crisis, the escape from Egypt, and was a relationship expressed in particular ethical terms. Moses' work had been to establish a new "people" by a federation of tribes under the aegis of a deity new to them, perhaps in name, and certainly in the personal character

[5] Cf. the Jewish *credo,* Deut. 6:4, and Paul's affirmation of monotheism, I Cor. 8:5, 6.

[6] Isa. 31:3; Zech. 4:6.

[7] Cf. Robinson, *Religious Ideas of the Old Testament,* pp. 46 f.

[8] Hab. 3.

[9] "Yahweh" is probably the original form of the name "Jehovah." The latter form is the result of a mistake in transcription.

[10] E.g., Samson's strength, Judg. 15:14, and Saul's prophetic frenzy, I Sam. 19:23, 24.

henceforward represented by the name. The universal testimony of the historical and religious tradition of Israel is that the Mosaic covenant embodied a new kind of kinship with divinity, an ethical brotherhood within the community corresponding to the justice and mercy of its God. Social morality was thus not incidental, but fundamental.

The prophetic teaching is the drawing out, clarification and re-emphasis of this primary idea. The prophets insist that their message is not new but is only a return to that which had distinguished Israel's religion from the beginning.[11] Yahweh, unlike other gods, was worshiped primarily in the ethical obedience of his people. The cultus of festivals and sacrifices was useless unless accompanied by the quality of social life prescribed in the covenant.[12] The essence of Yahweh's nature was his justice, his mercy and his truth, and since he was personally active in human affairs there must follow ultimately the vindication of those whose character and conduct were akin to his.

This ethicizing of the idea of God was, however, a lengthy process, and one that was neither uniform nor consistent in its development. The course of that development can never, indeed, be traced with precision, because our sources are far from being a complete record and are anonymous and undated to a larger degree than is generally recognized. But in the books which bear the names of the eighth-century prophets there is sufficient material that can be accepted with assurance, to show the idea of God which then prevailed in prophetic circles. Yahweh was a Being of majestic holiness,[13] merciful, just and true, controlling the processes of nature and the destiny of his people, and supremely con-

[11] Amos 2:9 f.; Hos. 11:1 f.; 13:4 f.; Isa. 1:26.

[12] Isa. 1:11 f.; Jer. 7:22 f.

[13] "Holiness" had no ethical connotation originally; it was simply the "otherness" of the divine. Isaiah saw that the "otherness" of Yahweh partook of his distinctive moral attributes; cf. Isa. 6.

cerned for the establishment of right relationships among men. This teaching of the eighth-century prophets about God may be taken as the pivot of the Old Testament movement. The popular religion of many of their contemporaries was on a lower level, and there were to follow relapses and deviations from this central doctrine, as there was to be also further advance and enrichment.

To a people so vividly conscious of God as present and active in past history and present circumstance, events are not accidental, but fraught with momentous significance. Social history is a movement, with direction and goal. Human life has unique importance because of the divine purpose to be fulfilled in it; and that not in some heavenly world, but in the land of Israel and among the nations.

II. What Man Is

"What is man?" The psalmist answers that man is the crown of creation, yet stands apart from all other created things because he alone can have fellowship with God.[14] The creation stories bear the same testimony, but answer the question also from another angle: "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man *became* [not, *was given*] a living soul."[15] Man is not a soul living in a body; his soul is a vital unity which includes the body. The soul is the whole man that eats and speaks and feels and acts.[16] The spirit is the force of the soul-organism; when the spirit departs the soul languishes and dies.[17]

This Hebrew view of the psycho-physical organism is closer to the modern scientific view than is the traditional

[14] Ps. 8.
[15] Gen. 2:7.
[16] Ps. 107:5, 9; Ps. 34:2; Ps. 77:2; Lev. 5:1–4.
[17] Ps. 143:7; Isa. 57:16.

clear-cut distinction between soul and body. It explains, among other things, why the Bible speaks of resurrection rather than of immortality.[18] For our immediate purpose it is important as emphasizing that man's physical and his spiritual welfare ought not to be sharply contrasted, as is so frequently done by those who maintain that the church's task is "purely spiritual." Again and again in the Bible the promise of physical welfare is *included with* the promise of spiritual deliverance, simply because the life of man is one. "I will satisfy her poor with bread; her priests also I will clothe with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy."[19] "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses."[20]

The "name" marks off the individual soul. But there is no atomic individualism in the Bible; rather the reverse, a prevailing sense of the pre-eminence of the common life. The solidarity of the family, in particular, meant that there was a family life and a family soul of which the members were organic parts. This is why the sins of the fathers were expected to be visited upon the children,[21] and why murder devolved on the victim's kinsmen the duty of blood-revenge.[22] The tribalism of the nomadic period remained in large measure the classical ideal, so that a vivid family consciousness pervaded Israel's covenant constitution.

III. The Covenant Community

As a "brother" was, strictly, a fellow member of an actual kinship group, so "neighbour" designated a fellow member of a social group or "people," united in a "covenant" which

[18] It explains, too, why the resurrection doctrine developed so late.
[19] Ps. 132:15, 16.
[20] Cf. Isa. 49:10; Mic. 4:4; Luke 1:53; and contrast Isa. 8:21.
[21] Exod. 20:5.
[22] II Sam. 21:1 f.; 3:27.

was their principle of association. The covenant, originally, was an artificial extension of the kin. It was an agreement, upon certain conditions, to share a common life. It bound men together in a unity of interest and purpose so that their society was not a mechanical combination of individuals but a living structure of relationships. A man might be a participant in several covenants whose terms were not incompatible: a covenant of his nation, a covenant of his calling,[23] a covenant of friendship.[24] "Justice" was the maintenance of the normal working of the covenant relationship. "Mercy" was the sharing of its "blessing." Its "peace" was not just the absence of strife but something positive, the harmonious well-being of the covenant of souls, which in turn depended on the rightness or "righteousness" of the relationship.

The life and teaching of Jesus Christ assume the substantial results of the ethical and religious development of the tradition in which he stood. He works with the same basic conceptions of God, Man, and Covenant Community, though deepened, enriched and unified as never before. That which to many had been a "*far-off* divine event," he makes real and near. The organic kinship-community is fundamental in his preaching of the imminent Kingdom of God, the Father. There is the same insistence as in the prophets, that the institutions of society must foster man's highest life in harmonious ethical relationship with his fellows and with God.[25] Man as brother, neighbour and son of the Kingdom is more than an economic, political or even religious unit. As a child of God his worth is beyond measurement.[26]

It is this consideration which determines Jesus' attitude to social institutions, as illustrated by one of his best-known

[23] Num. 25:13.
[24] I Sam. 18:3.
[25] Matt. 5:23.
[26] Matt. 12:12; Luke 12:7.

aphorisms: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."[27] Whether formulated in law or carried forward by the unconscious momentum of custom, institutions are supposed to safeguard an ordering of social life which secures those values the community desires to have secured. But institutions, which should be channels directing social forces to the enhancement of the values of social life, do not readily follow when life moves away from them. Instead they tend to become rigid and to inhibit the free movement and vital integration it is their function to promote. Why does this happen? Because in a stratified society prestige and economic advantage accrue, under its established institutions, to a dominant group, which has thus both the motive and the power to resist change which would be to the general advantage. It is extremely significant that Jesus was put to death at the instigation of the "chief priests and rulers of the people,"[28] who had most to lose if his free attitude towards the law and the sacrifices should become general. The prophets and Jesus were critical of the prevailing social structure in so far as it tended to obstruct rather than to further the free spiritual life of men in an organic community.

IV. The Institution of Property

We shall now examine briefly the attitude of biblical writers generally towards the fundamental institutions of property, the economic process and political authority. It is to be noted again that the "family consciousness" of early tribal society was the classical ideal of Israel's religious thinkers, for it was felt to have embodied human and spiritual values which the later growth of economic and political power failed to maintain, and in fact destroyed.

[27] Mark 2:27. [28] Luke 23:13.

In the nomadic period economic wealth was in flocks and herds, held in common, or by the head of the family in trust for the family and its dependents. The only private property was personal property such as weapons, dress and ornaments. With the settlement in Canaan agriculture became the principal base of subsistence, especially in the north, and the family's property came to include real property such as fields and vineyards. A vital attachment between the family and its land was established, with a sacred sanction corresponding to the national-religious " myth " and doctrine that Yahweh had given Canaan to Israel as her own possession.[29] Each was " an inheritance of the fathers," the source, in God's hands, of the well-being of the smaller and the larger family. The owner had not absolute right of disposal. Laws were formulated to maintain the sacred connection of the family with its land, to make difficult its alienation and make easy its recovery.[30] Their spirit is summed up in Leviticus 25:23: " The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine." While there is no historical evidence to show that the law of " the Year of Jubilee " was ever actually enforced,[31] the provision for the periodic cancellation of all land transfers is the clearest expression of the principle that the institution of property must be the instrument of life and not its master. Possession may be nine points of the law in a commercial society, but in a religious society the proportion is reversed and the " rights " of private property are subordinate to the human and social good.[32]

The problem became more difficult with the emergence of urban and commercial conditions. Foreign conquest brought to Israel new wealth from the tribute of conquered

[29] Cf. I Kings 21:3.

[30] Lev. 25:23 f.; Deut. 15:1–3; 19:14.

[31] Lev. 25:1 f. Vested interests were doubtless too strong.

[32] Cf. Exod. 22:26, 27; Deut. 24:6.

peoples. Solomon (and probably David himself in his later reign) forsook the principle of share-and-share-alike established for his warriors by David before he came to the throne.[33] There arose around the court a class owning wealth without social responsibility. The magnificence of Solomon's court, his great building program and his standing army were paid for in part by the tolls he levied on the trade routes which crossed his territory, and in part by the foreign trade he operated as a state monopoly. But the main burden fell upon his subjects, who were supposed to be his brethren [34] and were in fact his slaves. The conscription of labour crippled their efforts at self-support, and a crushing weight of taxation drove them to mortgage their land and their persons.[35] The fabric of the covenant was rent in twain when enslaved Israelites and a landless proletariat confronted the *nouveaux riches* on their great estates. Property had lost its religious sanction as the instrument of the common life, and, being equated now with private wealth, had become instead a barrier to neighbourhood.

This sharp division of the community into rich and poor is denounced by the prophets as the fruit of predatory "covetousness," and a lamentable breach of the solidarity of the covenant people. "Woe to them that devise iniquity . . . they *covet* fields *and seize* them," cries Micah.[36] It is clear that the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet . . . ,"[37] refers, like the prohibitions of theft, murder and adultery, to an overt act of acquisitiveness which injures a covenant brother and disrupts society. The accumulation of property is seen as antisocial and luxury is linked with its human cost.[38] Poverty, cruelty, the perversion of justice and of religion, are traced to their source in an acquisitiveness

[33] I Sam. 30:24.
[34] II Sam. 5:1–3; Deut. 17:20.
[35] I Kings 4:7, 22–28; 5:13–16; 12:4.
[36] Mic. 2:1, 2.
[37] Exod. 20:17.
[38] Amos 4:1; 6:3–6.

that is alien to the neighbourhood principle of the covenant.[39]

Turning to the Gospels, we find that Jesus takes essentially the same stand on the relative rights of property and life. He quotes the commandment against covetousness with the comment that life does not consist in multiplying one's property.[40] In the Parable of the Prosperous Fool which follows in the same context,[41] as well as in the categorical: "You cannot serve God and Capital,"[42] and in his comment on the privileged youth whose wealth barred his way into the Kingdom,[43] Jesus plainly asserts an ethic of property — that the accumulation of wealth is not only inadequate as a goal, but is actually incompatible with wholehearted pursuit of the true ends of life. The very terms of commercialism are used to point the contrast: "What doth it *profit* a man, to *gain* the whole world, and forfeit his life?" (or, "his soul").[44] There is inevitably a barrier between rich and poor, and in the Kingdom there are to be no barriers.[45] It is surely an inescapable conclusion that a social structure in which the rights of property are paramount, and an economic order in which the motive power is acquisitiveness and the certain result a division of society into rich and poor, are incompatible with the mind of Christ.[46]

[39] Hos. 12:7, 8; Amos 8:4–7; Mic. 3:1–3; etc. These prophets are, of course, two centuries after Solomon, but they spoke to similar conditions.

[40] Luke 12:15.

[41] Luke 12:16–21.

[42] Matt. 6:24. "Mammon" is not just a synonym for "worldliness"; it is an Aramaic word meaning specifically "gain, accumulated wealth, property."

[43] Matt. 19:16–26.

[44] Mark 8:36.

[45] Luke 16:19–31.

[46] A mistaken interpretation of the Parable of the Talents has served as a convenient rationalization for capitalism. This parable is one of three parables of "The End," which are grouped together in Matt. 25, immediately following the Apocalypse of the End in Matt. 24. They teach that the End

V. The Economic Process

The teaching of the Bible about economic institutions might almost be deduced from its teaching on the institution of property. In the beginning the nomadic tribe had an immediate and organic relation to its means of subsistence, and the economic process was largely unconscious because it was natural. Production and distribution were on a communal basis and could be distinguished only artificially. The economic surplus, if any, went to increase the wealth of the tribe in flocks and herds.

With the transition to agriculture the same principles were at first maintained. Land was held for the benefit of the clan or household, which drew its subsistence almost entirely from its own holdings. Any economic surplus was still, in the main, directly distributed, by barter or trade for what would increase the family's amenities, or by increasing the family wealth in stored produce or in herds.

The advent of the monarchy, however, with its new standards of luxury and its demands for state expenses, drained off the economic surplus of the masses. The development of domestic and foreign trade and the appearance of a wealthy class interposed a new element in the economic process — exchange — between production and distribution. A commercial class appeared, merchants and middlemen who drew their subsistence from the general pool of production. Money came into use [47] not only as a medium of exchange

will be sudden and unexpected (The Ten Virgins), that it will involve a solemn reckoning (The Talents), and that the reckoning will be in terms of the covenant responsibilities of neighbourhood (The Judgment). The Parable of the Talents has a single definite point, illustrated from conditions familiar to the hearers. It no more proves that capitalist principles have Christ's approval than his Parable of Dives and Lazarus proves that all rich men go to hell and all poor men to heaven.

[47] Silver measured by weight was the principal form of currency, though gold was also used. There was no coinage before the Persian period.

and a yardstick of economic values but as stored-up wealth. The making of loans upon security and the taking of exorbitant interest became common practice.[48] The accumulation of material wealth became a new and distinct objective of economic effort, which formerly had been directed to the sustenance and security of harmonious, healthy community life.

The prophets denounced this as the loss of something vital to a community life that had been based on a humane religion, something for which the expensive ceremonial of the cult was a poor compensation. There is nothing approaching an economic analysis. But there is an instinctive moral contempt for the pursuit of wealth as such, a hatred of the greed, violence and dishonesty which cling like shadows to an acquisitive society, and moral indignation at class divisions which are not only the results of injustice but are themselves unjust.[49] Poverty, war, political and judicial corruption, three great evils of which the masses of the people are the principal victims, are seen to be rooted in the greed and violence of the powerful.[50] God and his spokesmen are on the side of those for whom the odds are too great.[51]

The prophetic protest had some effect. The taking of interest from the poor, and eventually from all fellow Israelites, was forbidden.[52] Laws were established restricting the nature of the pledge which might be taken as security for a loan. Two of them which embody important principles may be quoted: "If thou take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down, for that is his only covering."[53] "No man shall take the mill

[48] Cf. II Kings 4:1; Ps. 15:5; Prov. 28:8.
[49] Hos. 12:7; Amos 8:4 f.
[50] Amos 2:6 f.; 5:12; Hos. 7:1–8; Mic. 3:9–4:5; Jer. 22:13 f.
[51] Isa. 3:14 f.; 9:4 f.
[52] Exod. 22:25; Deut. 23:20.
[53] Exod. 22:26, 27.

or the upper millstone to pledge, for he taketh to pledge a man's life." [54] The first of these establishes the priority of humane considerations over the "rights" of money. The second is a radical application of the same principle; it forbids a financial operation which would separate a man from the tools of production on which his life depends. This is an axe laid unto the root of capitalism.

But the crystallizing of the prophetic message into social standards was a process slow and imperfect. Some of the messengers saw no issue but cataclysmic destruction for the welter of moral evil and human pain which they confronted.[55] Others rose to the revolutionary faith that God himself would intervene, directly or through his representative the Messiah, to establish a social order of justice, neighbourhood and peace.[56] Only with the triumph of the covenant-religion would men turn from mutual destruction and find economic security for themselves in forsaking the acquisitive struggle which denies security to their fellows.[57] One of the greatest prophetic voices declares that the Messiah's mission is that of an emancipator of the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives and the oppressed.[58] It is most significant that Jesus Christ, in the synagogue at Nazareth, took these words as his own commission.[59]

This deliberate acceptance of a Messianic role which included the championship of the poor and disinherited, is an important consideration in view of the statement frequently made by comfortable Christians that Christ left economic matters alone and the church should do the same. It is quite true that Jesus did not propound an economic

[54] Deut. 24:6.
[55] Amos 9:1–8a; Joel 1:15; 2:1 f.; Mic. 3:12; Zeph. 1.
[56] Isa. 9:1–7; 11:1–9; 65:17–25; etc.
[57] Mic. 4:1–5.
[58] Isa. 61:1–3.
[59] Luke 4:16–21.

doctrine distinct from his religious message. But he took on himself the mantle of the prophets, and declared that the divine revolution [60] on which they had staked their hopes was now at hand, providing that, through penitence and faith, men were ready for it. In the very forefront of the vision of the Kingdom is the abolition of poverty, oppression and economic injustice, because these stand as stubborn obstacles to the free spiritual life of man in fellowship.[61]

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." [62] No verse of the New Testament sums up the mission of Jesus Christ more adequately than this. It is a "spiritual" mission, indeed, but one that has economic consequences. For he goes on to declare that the lust for possessions without which a commercial economy cannot operate is an enemy of the soul, and, in flat contradiction to the world's standards, that greatness lies in service rather than in power.[63] He pronounces beatitudes on qualities of life completely antithetical to those which capitalism rewards,[64] and declares that men must choose between serving God and pursuing wealth.[65] He pictures the judgment seat of God, before which the *nations* shall give account of their treatment of the victims of economic and attendant evils.[66]

With Paul, the emphasis at first appears to have shifted from the gospel of the Kingdom to a Christ-mysticism, to the construction of a theology of Christ's person and work, and to the building up of a Christian community within the pagan state. But Paul takes for granted much from the

[60] Mark 1:15; Luke 4:21; 6:20 f.
[61] Jer. 22:3, 4; Isa. 58:6–8; Ps. 72:1–4; Luke 7:22; 19:8.
[62] John 10:10.
[63] Luke 16:13–15; 12:13–23.
[64] Matt. 5:3–11.
[65] Luke 18:24, 25; 16:13.
[66] Matt. 25:31–46.

Old Testament. It is now generally agreed that there is no break between Jesus and Paul in their essential religious and ethical positions.

Like Jesus, Paul sums up the Law in a sentence: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour"; [67] and it is to be remembered that the neighbour is not the individual next door, but any fellow man, even "a Samaritan." [68] He counsels the bearing of one another's burdens,[69] since men are members of one body in which there must be no schism; a pretty commentary on the struggle for profits, with its cutthroat competition and its drive to reduce labour costs. Paul knew from experience the suffering of the workers.[70] But he declares that God has chosen the submerged classes whom the world despised.[71] He is quite specific on the profit motive: "They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts . . . for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." [72] And quite incidentally Paul throws out remarks exhibiting an ethic which cuts right across capitalistic practice: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another"; "If any will not work, neither let him eat." [73]

VI. Religion and Politics

The attitude of biblical religion toward political institutions must be dealt with more briefly. The sturdy independence of the prophets asserted the limitation of the rights

[67] Rom. 13:10.

[68] Cf. Luke 10:25 f.

[69] Gal. 6:2; I Cor. 12:12 f.

[70] I Cor. 4:11–13.

[71] I Cor. 1:26–68.

[72] I Tim. 6:9, 10. It is assumed that I Timothy is Pauline, at least in substance.

[73] Rom. 13:8; II Thess. 3:10. It is interesting to note that this last verse is quoted as a basic principle in the proposed new constitution of the U.S.S.R.

of the state, another inheritance from the past which they believed remained essential to an organic and humane community. Their monarchs were not despots — or, if they were, the right of ethical criticism, and ultimately the right of rebellion, is reserved. Nathan rebukes David for using his royal authority for private and evil ends.[74] Ahijah instigates rebellion against the slave-labour policy of Solomon, and Shemaiah forbids the crushing of a revolt, which had followed a king's denial of his subjects' covenant rights.[75] Elijah curses Ahab for an act of acquisitive violence which would have passed unnoticed in any other oriental kingdom, and is himself commissioned to plot the overthrow of two neighbouring dynasties.[76] Amos is banished for preaching in the precincts of a royal chapel that a society based on injustice is doomed, while Jeremiah indicts his king for judicial murder, violence and oppression.[77] Throughout, a despotic political authority is challenged, in the name of the ethico-religious "Covenant" constitution of Israel. The Law of Kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14–20 sets forth the principle that the king is but the first among brethren in a community constituted on a religious basis.

Again, when we turn to the New Testament we find remarkable agreement with the prophetic stand, except that a more excellent way is substituted for the resort to violence.[78] The Kingdom of God subordinated all lesser sovereignties.[79] Yet neither Jesus nor Paul[80] challenged the Roman authority, and Jesus refused to be trapped into an

[74] II Sam. 12.

[75] I Kings 11:26 f.; 12:21–24.

[76] I Kings 21:17 f.; 19:15–17.

[77] Amos 7:7 f.; Jer. 22:13 f.

[78] Matt. 26:52.

[79] Matt. 10:17–22.

[80] In Paul's work, the "Roman Peace" and his standing as a citizen were great advantages. But in the next generation Rome was "Babylon the Great, . . . drunken with the blood of the saints"; cf. Rev. 17.

overt act which would have cut short his work before he was ready.[81] But the Romans, after all, were only the residuary legatees of authority in Judaea. Effective political power lay with the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Herodian Party. It was they who opposed Jesus when it became clear that his teaching was undermining their power, and it was their Sanhedrin, or Council, which in the first instance condemned him to death. Though they could not provide evidence convincing to Roman justice, by implication their accusation was true: "Every one that maketh himself a king, opposeth Caesar."[82] The Greatest Emancipator could not but come into conflict finally with political authority founded on brute force.

VII. The Gospel of the Kingdom

In what way did Jesus "make himself a king?" Clearly by the assumption of the role of the Messiah, or agent of the divine intervention, who was to establish God's Kingdom or "Kingship" among men. The Messiah was pictured most frequently as a king. What is the essential content of the gospel of the Kingdom? We should be clear about what it is, and what it is not.

The story of Christ's three temptations in the wilderness[83] is a pictorial representation of his rejection of three possible views of the nature of the Kingdom. They see the Kingdom in terms of the economic order alone, or of the ecclesiastical establishment, or of the political state. They are temptations to dominate men by economic pressure, superstition or force, ways that were incompatible with his spiritual intuition as to what God's Kingship meant. Each substituted an immediate object for the ultimate one and confused the fruits with the roots of the Kingdom life.

[81] Mark 12:13–17. [82] John 19:12. [83] Matt. 4:1–11.

There could be no substitute for the genuine recognition of God as King and Father.

For the Kingdom, to Jesus, was something which transcended the categories of space and time, and yet might be realized within them; something which had its roots in the Divine Reality, but which might grow up in the sight of men. He spoke of it as a "mystery,"[84] i. e., as truth about reality so alien to the spirit of the world that it appeared paradoxical, except to faith. Only those with ears to hear could receive it. For it is the timeless life-principle of the life of persons-in-fellowship, of the community of the Divine Covenant. The coming of the Kingdom is inseparable from the hallowing of the name and the doing of the will of God.

It is necessary to emphasize this, for the Gospels are not essays in political theory. Jesus was not just a socialist agitator ahead of his time. The Kingdom comes from God, and only those who know God can learn its secret. That secret is the secret of life in fellowship. It results in a particular kind and quality of human life. But as life is embodied in an organism, so the Kingdom is to "come on earth" in an actual structure of social relationships, if it ever is to be more than a subjective ideal. We read in a famous passage of the Apocalypse of "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God *out of* heaven."[85] In all phases and on every level of personal and social life — political, economic, cultural and religious — the Kingdom will have its appropriate and characteristic manifestation. We shall not make the mistake of identifying any particular social order (which is necessarily tentative and approximate) with the final reality of the Kingdom itself. Nor shall we make the other mistake, perhaps more common, of asserting that Christianity is a matter for individuals and has

[84] Mark 4:11.
[85] Rev. 21:2.

no special relevance to the way society is organized and the way the economic system works.

Our examination of the Bible conceptions of God, Man and Community, and its consistent teaching on the bearing of religion on social institutions, has indicated in summary fashion the direction in which we must move if the prayer "Thy Kingdom come, on earth" is to be something more than a form of words. The biblical basis for a Christian revolution is clearly visible to those who are not too preoccupied or too conditioned by their own social privilege to see it. Christianity is the message of life abundant, and all that cramps and destroys life is Christianity's enemy. Included within its message of deliverance from sin and its evil fruits is the promise of deliverance from other men's sins and the collective sins of society: the tolerance of intolerable poverty, cruelty, ignorance and injustice; the perpetuation of unspiritual views of property and the economic process; the refusal to recognize that class conflict is no less a fact because it is largely beneath the surface, and, if we are privileged, "the spoil of the poor is in our houses." Our own economic interests and those of people we admire prevent our taking the great risk of faith, faith in the coming of God's Kingdom.

We lack the sympathetic imagination necessary to identify Christ with the unemployed, but "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these least, ye did it not to me." We are not prepared for the desperate enterprise of following Jesus to his final conflict with the embattled powers of this world. "If any man would come after me . . . let him take up *his* cross, and follow me."[86] The context shows plainly that "to take up a cross" meant actually to face death, and not merely to bear tribulations patiently, as we so often interpret it. Why should Jesus speak of a cross while he was still far

[86] Mark 8:34.

in the north, at Caesarea Philippi? Because he knew that the long road to Jerusalem he was shortly to take would bring him face to face with the Jewish authorities, entrenched behind social prestige and economic privilege, and knowing full well that these were threatened by the teaching of the prophet of Nazareth. There could be but one result, unless God intervened by miracle — the short road to the hill Calvary and the prophet bearing his cross. "If any man would come after me": the words are wistful.

To follow Jesus means far more than to work for a Christian reconstruction of society. But it *does* mean that. To put it quite simply: the economic system under which we live puts the interests of the individual before the interests of the community and maintains the rights of property before the rights of life; it exalts acquisitiveness and measures all things in the market, even holy things; it perpetuates the poverty of multitudes, with all the ills of body, mind and spirit that go with it, to give a few the opportunity to amass wealth; it concentrates attention on material rather than on spiritual objectives; its basic principle is competition rather than co-operation. In all these particulars, and in others, it denies the first principles of the Kingdom of God.

Is the church to pass by on the other side, like the priest and the Levite, intent on ecclesiastical business? It was a layman and a heretic who bound up the wounds of the robbers' victim, and the point of the story is plain. There is one saying of Jesus about the Kingdom that is terrible in its implications: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." [87]

If Christendom is to be true to its origins and to the message of its Sacred Book, it must clearly see that the present capitalist economy is fundamentally at variance with the

[87] Matt. 21:43.

principles of the Kingdom of God. This recognition, and consequent action, will mean sacrifice for many Christians who now possess even a moderate measure of economic and social privilege. It will mean ostracism and risk, perhaps of a cross, when they join issue with economic might and despotic power. But the servant is not greater than his Lord.

EUGENE FORSEY

V

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

I. The Nature of Capitalism

THE insertion of a chapter on economics into a religious book ought not to need either explanation or defence. The field of religion is the whole of life. That should be explanation and defence enough.

There are still, however, many who insist that the business of religion is the development of Christian character in the individual and that if only we can produce enough sanctified individuals economic problems will solve themselves.

But Christian character does not develop in a vacuum. It is forged in the struggles of daily life; and most of the daily life of most people is spent in the effort to satisfy economic wants. The struggle for bread is not the only thing in life, nor the highest thing. But it is basic, for without bread there is no life. " Man shall not live by bread alone " does not mean " Man shall live without bread." If the economic system under which we must earn our living forces us to spend most of our waking hours in ways which

thwart and deny everything for which Christianity stands, religious leaders may preach themselves black in the face with only barely perceptible effect upon the mass of mankind. In the present "pre-history" stage of society, as Marx called it, when man has not mastered his economic environment, the economic factor conditions everything else. "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also."

It is necessary therefore to change economic society. The first step towards changing society is to understand the existing society. We cannot start from a mental picture of the kind of world we should like to live in and then try to mould the real world into the likeness of that idea. The real world is refractory material. We cannot push history in the direction we should like it to take, in sublime disregard of the forces actually at work. We must start from the world as it really is, try to find out what basic forces are in operation, and then work in and with and through them to a new world which is *possible*. If we try to cross the purposes of reality we can end only by producing a result exactly opposite from that we desire: "Thou makest the wrath of man to praise Thee."

Hence in the economic sphere our primary task is to understand, first, the nature of the economic problem, and second, the way in which capitalism works.

Political economy is, by derivation, the science of the management of the public household, the community. The essential economic problem which any community has to solve is the same as that which confronts a private household: our wants are unlimited, our means of supplying them limited. Modern science has made possible a plenty hitherto undreamed of, but not even modern science has made the things we want as plentiful as air or sunshine. Our supplies of natural resources and of machinery, at least, still remain limited. There is not now, and as far as we can see there

never will be, enough of everything to satisfy all of everybody's wants.[1]

Moreover our limited means have alternative uses. Our supply of steel, for example, may be used for motor cars, bridges, girders, sewing machines, baby carriages, cutlery, rails, adding machines, cream separators and dozens of other things. Our supply of capital may provide us with whiskey or milk, houses or explosives, roads or ski-jumps. Any community, therefore, like any private household, has to decide somehow, consciously or unconsciously, what goods and services are to be produced and in what proportions: how much of its limited means shall go to which uses.

A capitalist society makes this decision unconsciously, by means of a pricing mechanism. Resources are to be had only at a price. The share each industry gets depends on its ability to pay the price. Its ability to pay the price depends on the demand for its products. Thus resources are directed into production of the goods and services for which there is the greatest demand.

If " demand " and " need " were the same thing this would be a delightful arrangement. But under capitalism they are not and never can be. " An empty stomach is no customer unless the owner can pay for what he eats." Money demand reflects not need but the distribution of income, and in a capitalist society incomes are, inevitably, grossly unequal. Wants, therefore, make themselves felt not in proportion to their urgency but in proportion to the incomes of those who feel them. Where the rich can " afford " to gratify their lightest whims, the poor cannot " afford " even the ordinary decencies of civilized existence. A capitalist economic system, obeying the pull of money demand, is bound to devote

[1] If only because each new invention creates new wants. In a witty phrase, " The desire for things which our ancestors never even thought of is called the progress of civilization."

an important part of its limited means to satisfying the not very urgent wants of a relatively small minority of well-to-do people while the bulk of the population goes short of elementary necessities.[2]

In other words, to capitalism "need" has no meaning. Capitalist industry does not exist to supply needs; it exists to make profits. The supplying of needs, or "service to the public," is purely incidental. If it "pays" we get it, if it doesn't we don't.

This is not an ethical judgment about capitalism but a fact; and *it holds good irrespective of the moral or intellectual qualities of individual capitalists*. It is the qualities or defects of a system, not of individuals, which are in question. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" To call this an attack on fruit growers would be silly. Thistles simply will not produce figs and no amount of saintliness or intelligence in the fruit growers will alter the fact one iota. It is just as foolish, and for the same reason, to accuse critics of the capitalist system of attacking capitalists. The fruits of capitalism result from the nature of capitalism. A capitalist who does not cater to money demand, regardless of "need," will cease to be a capitalist. A capitalist whose firm finds its gross income reduced by depression must economize on wage-bill or make way for some one who will. For, as long as the firm remains solvent it must pay the fixed

[2] Here is one example, taken from the *Census of Agriculture* (Canada), 1931, Final Bulletin No. 19, Table X, on *Tenure, Farm Values, Farm Facilities, etc.* It shows the percentage of farm houses that have:

	Water piped in Kitchen	*Water piped in Bathroom*	*Gas or Electric Light*
CANADA	11.7%	4.9%	10%
QUEBEC	31.9	8.2	14
ONTARIO	10.4	6.3	16.8
SASKATCHEWAN	1.4	1.2	2.8
BRITISH COLUMBIA	31.2	20.0	24.5

(These are fair samples of figures for all provinces.)

interest on its bonds; rents and many of the higher salaries are fixed for relatively long periods; the firm is in business to pay dividends; therefore the first important economies available are wage-cuts, lay-offs, short time, or some combination of these. A humane general manager may pace the floor in anguish, sleepless night after sleepless night, but he cannot escape his fate. A flock of archangels administering capitalism would be under the same compulsion, and their actions could not be appreciably different.

The personal character of capitalists is relevant only as itself one of the fruits of capitalism. The struggle for survival in the business world is, from a Christian point of view, dysgenic. Capitalism has its own beatitudes. They are not those of the Sermon on the Mount; nor should we ever have thought they were had we taken Jesus seriously instead of treating his words as a sort of "holy nonsense." Nothing could be more explicit than his warnings: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"; "The deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world choke the good seed"; "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!" We have "spiritualized" these sayings, but his first hearers did not. When he said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom," the disciples were dismayed: "Who then can be saved?" If *not even* the rich, what chance have we? But Jesus insisted on his inversion of the conventional idea, driving it home with a touch of grim humour. "With God all things are possible" — *even* the salvation of a rich man!

Capitalists are pretty much what capitalism makes them. So are the rest of us. It is not a matter of blaming but of understanding: "Judge not that ye be not judged." To see the problem in terms of "good" people and "bad" people is

to rule out the possibility of solution. That is the pathetic fallacy of some capitalist "reformers." No intelligent socialist has ever imagined that putting socialists in charge of capitalism — putting "us" in place of "them," leaving the *system* still in operation — would produce any important result. The thistles would go on producing thistles and the thorns, thorns.

Simple as this is, few parts of the socialist case have been more widely and thoroughly misunderstood. We must therefore emphasize that this point is fundamental, and that unless it is clearly understood and borne constantly in mind the whole socialist case will seem "just a jumble of organized nonsense."

II. The Trend Towards Monopoly

The first thing that emerged from our analysis of the economic system was that capitalism is not concerned with "need." A second, not less important, is that it is necessarily a scarcity economy. Broadly speaking, the nearer anything gets to being a "free good" like air or sunshine the less profit there is in it for the capitalist.

As long as capitalism was thoroughly competitive this did not much matter. Each capitalist controlled so small a part of the total supply of any commodity that he could not restrict production to increase profits. If he tried, his competitors took his customers away from him.

The development of more and more expensive machines, however, brought with it large-scale production, and with this, inevitably, a tendency toward monopoly. Competition between large units means appalling waste (public utilities furnish the most obvious example), sometimes to the verge of ruin for all the competitors. The economies of combination are correspondingly large and the relatively small num-

ber of competitors makes the thing easy. The result is that competition has almost disappeared from some industries and is disappearing from others.[3] Pure monopoly, complete control of the whole supply of any commodity or service in a given market, is not very common. In Canada, for instance, the only important examples are public utilities, explosives, nickel, cement and certain heavy chemicals. But:

Monopoly, considered as any form of industrial organization with sufficient control over the supply of a commodity to enable the organization to modify the price to its own advantage, has made great headway. . . . A large measure of control may rest with a single concern, in spite of the fact that it is not alone in the field. Examples are tobacco, meat packing, petroleum products, fruit and vegetable canning. In others, two or three concerns may dominate the market. In the latter case, agreements among a few producers may cause the public to suffer many of the disadvantages of monopoly with few of the potential economic advantages of centralized control or operation. At times, as in the electrical manufacturing and tin plate industries, these agreements are international, operating through control and exchange of patents and through agreements regarding markets. . . . Another type of monopolistic control, usually comprising a larger number of producers or traders and representing all or nearly all the members of an industry is . . . a price-fixing agreement enforced by trade association supervision and penalties. . . . The price agreement may be supplemented by a production or sales quota arrangement, by provisions for allocating customers and sales territories, or by eliminating competing plants by joint purchase or by a price war. . . . The establishment of a joint selling agency . . . can be of great benefit to its principals. . . . Potential competition and the competition of substitute commodities are not always effective in protecting the public against monopoly. . . . Interindustrial agreements can

[3] See Laidler, *Concentration of Control in American Industry;* also, *Social Planning for Canada,* pp. 85–102, a co-operative volume by members of the League for Social Reconstruction. (Thomas Nelson and Sons, Toronto, 1935.)

nullify the effect of the latter and newcomers to an industry can be quickly assimilated.[4]

In the United States anti-trust legislation has made these developments less easy to trace, but the careful studies of Dr. Laidler,[5] Professor Fetter[6] and Mr. G. C. Means[7] show that substantially the same conditions prevail.

In some industries what appears to be free competition still survives. But the farmer or small manufacturer who must borrow from big business at its price, buy machinery, fuel and materials from big business at its price and sell to big business at its price, competes only under the "remote control" of monopoly. His side of the market is competitive with a vengeance, the other side is not.[8]

Modern capitalism, therefore, is properly described as monopoly capitalism. The competitive capitalist could not restrict production to the point which would yield him maximum profit. The monopolist can and does. In some instances he even destroys goods already produced. Monopoly capitalism accordingly faces us, as competitive capitalism did not, with "the dilemma of profits or plenty."[9]

This is fairly obvious. But the growth of large-scale industry and monopoly has brought with it other consequences, less obvious but not less serious. In the early period of the industrial revolution individual proprietorship was the characteristic form of business organization. Ownership, control and management were in the same hands. Farming, the clothing trades, much retail trade, small construction and a

[4] *Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads,* Canada, 1935, pp. 48–49.

[5] *Op. cit.*

[6] *Masquerade of Monopoly.*

[7] *Industrial Prices and their Relative Inflexibility* (U. S. Senate Document 13, 74th Congress, first session).

[8] Cf. *Social Planning for Canada,* pp. 121–23, 132–33.

[9] Strachey, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis.*

few other industries still operate on this basis; but in most businesses individual proprietorship has given way to the limited company. The effects of the change are revolutionary. Ownership, control and management are no longer in the same hands: "The development of the modern corporation has made it possible to own without controlling and to control without owning."[10]

Where ownership is scattered across a continent or dispersed throughout the world, as it is in many of the largest corporations, it is clearly impossible for more than a handful of shareholders to attend the annual meeting. There is seldom the faintest attempt even to question the directors' policy, often no real opportunity. The directors usually hold enough proxies from absent shareholders to carry anything they please by overwhelming majorities. As the president of a great Canadian bank has frankly admitted, shareholders have little or nothing to say in the choice of directors: "How could they? They come to an annual meeting and the shareholders are nearly all represented by proxy and those that are in the room are not going to make any objections because they know these proxies are standing there and they are going to get voted down anyhow if they propose another slate."[11] Diffusion of ownership, far from securing economic democracy, actually facilitates minority control.

A. A. Berle and G. C. Means, in *The Modern Corporation and Private Property,* have made an elaborate study of the importance of minority control in American industry. A more recent investigation of Canadian industry by a Canadian Royal Commission on Price Spreads shows much the same situation. The Commission asked the 145 largest non-financial corporations for "the names and holdings of all

[10] *Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads,* p. 14.

[11] *Evidence before the Banking Committee of the Canadian House of Commons,* 1934, pp. 510–11.

shareholders who owned more than 1 per cent of any class of stock and for the total number of shareholders with less than 1 per cent." It "classified as *privately owned* companies with 80 per cent or more of the voting stock owned by one person or group; as *majority controlled* those with 50 per cent to 79.99 per cent; as *minority controlled* those with 20 per cent to 49.99 per cent. Companies with less than 6 per cent of voting stock held by one group were classified as *management controlled,* on the assumption that with such a wide diffusion of ownership the entrepreneurial group could perpetuate itself in control; those with ownership ranging from 6 per cent to 19.99 per cent were regarded as *joint-minority-management controlled.*" The Commission found over 76 per cent of the assets controlled by groups owning less than half the voting stock, over 60 per cent by management or joint-minority-management. Leaving out 40 subsidiary companies, the corresponding figures are 93.5 per cent and 82.4 per cent. Furthermore: "Very few directors owned more than 1 per cent of the voting stock of the companies they directed. In 91 of the 145 companies no directors owned more than 1 per cent of the voting stock. Of the 101 directors of the other 54 companies (owning more than 1 per cent of such stock) 60 held between 1 and 3 per cent, 25 between 3 and 10 per cent, 7 between 10 and 20 per cent, 5 between 20 and 30 per cent, and 4 above 30 per cent." [12]

The scope of minority control has been further extended by various legal devices: non-voting stock, etc.; "voting trusts" and "management preferred" shares; investment trusts and other financial corporations; holding companies and "pyramiding." A few of many available examples may be cited. Of $220,000,000 of preferred class A and common stock sold to the public by Canadian corporations between

[12] *Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads,* pp. 15–17, 325–427.

1926 and 1930, "only some 16 per cent carried unrestricted voting rights."[13] Shareholders' investment (capital and reserves) in the three largest Canadian trust companies in 1934 amounted to $16,500,000; holdings of the controlling groups, to judge from the analogy of Canadian banks, whose directors owned in 1933 only 3.8 per cent of the stock, were probably trifling; but total assets controlled by the three companies reached the tidy sum of $1,849,683,732. Similarly the two largest Canadian life insurance companies (one of them the largest single shareholder in American Telephone and Telegraph) with a shareholders' investment of $11,548,919 controlled assets of $907,741,241.[14] Less than a sixth of the stock of the Canadian Pacific Railway is held in Canada,[15] but the control unquestionably rests with this fraction; Canadian Pacific Railway in turn owned, in 1932, 51.6 per cent of the stock of Consolidated Mining and Smelting (which produces nearly all the Canadian output of lead and zinc); this company, in its turn, owned 90 per cent of West Kootenay Power, and something over half the shares of half a dozen or so other smallish concerns. In other words, the controlling group in Canadian Pacific Railway, owning certainly less than 20 per cent of its stock, controlled "Smelters" by what amounted to perhaps a 10 per cent investment, and several companies by barely a 5 per cent investment. Standard Oil of New Jersey, similarly, with 65 per cent ownership of Imperial Oil, which held 58 per cent International Petroleum, controlled this last with less than a 40 per cent investment.[16]

All these figures, of course, vary slightly from year to year,

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[14] *Poor's Manual of Financial Corporations*, 1934; *Financial Post Business Year Book*, 1934; the *Canadian Macmillan Report*, 1933, p. 101; *Financial Post*, March 16 and 23, 1935.

[15] C. P. R. annual reports.

[16] *Financial Post Survey of Corporate Securities*, 1934.

but the general effect remains. Control of the typical business unit is in the hands of a small, self-perpetuating board, responsible to no one but its own members. Under competition this might have no very great social significance. But when control of one or a few companies means control of a whole industry, and when this is repeated over a wide range of essential industries, the power of irresponsible oligarchy assumes proportions by no means negligible.

In fact, however, this power is multiplied a hundredfold. For monopoly does not stop at domination of single industries. More and more it is becoming interindustrial; the control of many different industries is falling into the same few hands. Canada again provides a beautifully clear illustration. Analysis of the directorates of Canadian public companies shows the same hundred and fifty names cropping up over and over again, covering practically the whole of large-scale industry except tobacco: some two hundred and sixty corporations (excluding subsidiaries). Eliminating intercompany holdings as far as possible, the total assets of 67 financial corporations concerned amounted in 1934 to $7,220,000,000; of 196 non-financial corporations, $5,928,000,000 (including 11 corporations operating mainly outside Canada, with total assets of $788,000,000): considerable amounts for a country of less than 11,000,000 people. One magnate's range is 28 companies (exclusive of subsidiaries), financial institutions with assets of more than $2,200,000,000 and non-financial with about the same, engaged in fields so diverse as banking, insurance, railways, power, air transport, steel, coal, bridges, lead and zinc, electrical equipment, tar, cement, flour, cottons, woollens, furs, a department store and a hotel. Another scores rather less heavily with 24 companies (financial with $1,480,000,000 assets, non-financial with $1,800,000,000), engaged in banking, railways, power, air transport, chemicals, rubber, steel, coal,

glass, flour, cottons, woollen underwear, milk, carpets, locomotives and a hotel. So in a less degree with the others. Our business leaders seem to have taken as their motto, "We count nothing human foreign to us."

In any modern industrial society, capitalist, socialist or anything else, the directing of economic life will and must be concentrated in a few hands. It does not follow, however, that those few must be private individuals, answerable to no one but themselves. The objection of Christians to this phase of modern capitalism should be not to the inevitable concentration but to the irresponsibility. All history demonstrates, as Professor Laski reminds us, that power is poisonous to those who wield it. Unchecked by responsibility to the community even the best of rulers will unconsciously identify the public interest with their own, and it needs no very penetrating analysis to see that public interest and private interest do not always coincide. How radically they may diverge we shall examine later.

Some one may protest here that in fact the power even of the most powerful capitalist oligarchies is not very great. Surely, on our own showing, they must simply respond automatically to money demand? The answer, paradoxical though it may seem, is, No. Under competition an impersonal, automatic mechanism, incomplete but fairly effective, settled simultaneously how much would be produced and at what prices it would be sold. No single producer, we have seen, was in a position to hold up prices. But monopolists can control prices. Under monopoly, therefore, pricing is no longer impersonal and automatic, but a matter of deliberate policy, the result of conscious decision by a few men sitting around a table.

The effect of monopoly upon the pricing mechanism may be summed up under four heads: "price and production policy," "transfer prices," "mass buying," and "consumers' choice." All need explanation.

(1) "Price and production policy" is best illustrated by the behaviour of American and Canadian industry during the depression. Traditional economics told us that when demand falls off, prices drop. Mr. Gardiner Means [17] in the United States, and the Research Committee of the League for Social Reconstruction [18] in Canada, have shown us that in the competitive industries, on the whole, this is exactly what happened: they met falling demand by lowering their prices and keeping up production. Most of the monopolies or quasi-monopolies, however, kept up prices and reduced production and employment. In Canada, for instance, between 1929 and 1932, agricultural prices fell 52 per cent, while agricultural production actually rose 13 per cent; agricultural implement prices, on the other hand, fell only 2.7 per cent while production fell 91 per cent.[19] It would be easy to multiply examples. A competitive economy, mainly agricultural, with *flexible* prices responding automatically to changes in demand, co-exists with a monopoly economy with *rigid* prices.

Two necessary results of this are, of course, increased unemployment in the rigid price industries and reduced incomes for the farmer, the small business man, and their employees in the competitive industries, with a consequent reduction in the purchasing power of the groups affected. To the extent that rigid prices help to maintain the profits of shareholders in monopoly industries, it might be supposed that the loss in purchasing power of the one group would be offset by a corresponding gain to the other. But the purchasing power destroyed is mainly *consumer* purchasing power. The shareholders of monopoly industries are likely to be fairly well-to-do and therefore likely to save an appreciable part of their incomes. Therefore any

[17] *Op. cit.*
[18] *Social Planning for Canada*, pp. 118–19.
[19] *Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads*, pp. 6–9.

compensating purchasing power created by rigid price policy will probably be to a considerable extent *investor* purchasing power. During a depression, lack of confidence makes industry reluctant to borrow and financial institutions reluctant to lend. The contraction in demand for consumers' goods is not offset by expansion in demand for producers' goods. A rigid price policy probably reduces not only consumer purchasing power but also total immediate purchasing power. It certainly helps to shift an undue share of the burden of depression on to the competitive industries.

(2) The "transfer price" problem is created by inter-industrial concentration. When several industrial and financial concerns are controlled by the same group of people, can we be certain that the terms on which goods and services pass between them are precisely those which would prevail in a market where buyer and seller were independent? In some cases we can be perfectly certain that they are not the same. Alike in Great Britain and in Canada, companies owning both coal mines and steel mills have often sold their coal to their mills at prices well below what they could have obtained in an open market.[20] The same has been true of British steel and shipbuilding,[21] of certain Canadian flour mills and bakeries.[22] There is reason to suspect artificial pricing in the transactions of certain Canadian branch plants with their parent concerns in other countries,[23] and perhaps in the contracts of some power companies with their customers.[24]

For obvious reasons it is not easy to secure evidence of

[20] "Ingot," *The Socialization of Iron and Steel*, p. 54; *Report of the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on the Coal Industry*, Halifax, 1926.

[21] *Socialization of Iron and Steel*, p. 54.

[22] *Report of the Registrar under the Combines Investigation Act*, Canada, 1931, pp. 31, 41.

[23] Canadian Customs Tariff Act, 1930 (second session), section 6.

[24] Note the *Report of the* (Lapointe) *Royal Commission on Electricity*, Quebec, 1935.

this kind of thing, but it may well be far more widespread than is generally supposed. One may for instance be permitted to question how far the capital market is really free and competitive when those who control a very large part of the *supply* of capital (banks, trust companies, insurance companies, investment dealers and industrial concerns with funds to invest) are so often the same people who control the industrial concerns which constitute the *demand* for capital. *Social Planning for Canada* has a little fable of a Mr. De Muggins and others, directors of the Lunar and Inter-Planetary Colonization Corporation, the Bank of Jupiter, the Hades Trust Company, the Milky Way Life Insurance Company, and the Arcturus Securities Corporation. The Lunar Company floats an issue of bonds secured by mortgage on the mountains of the moon and the rings of Saturn. Underwritten by the Bank of Jupiter and Arcturus Securities, the bonds are taken up largely by Hades Trust and Milky Way Life. "What kind of bargain," the authors pertinently ask, "does Mr. De Muggins drive with Mr. De Muggins?"[25] Any one who thinks the tale far-fetched may satisfy himself of its relevance by looking up the ordinary investment manuals. Bargaining with oneself bids fair to become more and more the characteristic form of "market" under monopoly capitalism.

(3) "Mass buying" is the equivalent on the buyers' side of monopoly on the sellers'. It exists wherever many small producers sell to a few large buyers. The most talked of contemporary examples are the transactions between department or chain stores on the one hand and the many small manufacturers of clothing, boots and shoes and furniture; but there have been signs of it also in the fishing industry, livestock raising, tobacco growing and the production of tomatoes for canning in Canada, and in the British steel in-

[25] *Op. cit.*, p. 111.

dustry.[26] The oldest and classic instance is of course the buying and selling of human labour. Hence the necessity for trade unions. "If there is only one buyer" — or a handful of powerful buyers — "for the product of many small producers . . . the producers are at the buyer's mercy, just as the monopolistic producer has the buyers at his mercy when the situation is reversed."[27] The A.A.A. in the United States, the Natural Products Marketing Act in Canada, and much legislation on wages have been in part attempts to redress the balance and provide conditions comparable to those of a "free market."

(4) "Consumers' choice," like most other things, means something quite different under monopoly from what it meant under competition. In a really competitive economy of small-scale producers the consumer counted for something. No small business could afford to pay for high-pressure advertising and salesmanship of the kind horribly familiar to us to-day. The consumer had a reasonable chance of deciding for himself what he wanted and finding out for himself which products best met his wants. If he was not satisfied with what Codlin had to offer he could take his custom to Short. But now, as often as not, there is no Short to go to. If the consumer doesn't like what the monopoly offers he can do without. In most instances, however, no difficulties will arise: the monopolist's advertising will make the consumer's decisions for him. The revelations of Consumers' Research[28] and the tribulations of the Tugwell bill are ironic commentaries on consumers' "freedom." In-

[26] *Canadian House of Commons Committee on Price Spreads and Mass Buying*, 1934, *Evidence*, pp. 1–1100, 1493–97, 1501–20, 1533–63, 1753–68; *Royal Commission on Price Spreads, Evidence*, pp. 3060, 3063, 3086, 3114, 3124–30, 3310, 3422; *Report*, p. 206; *Socialization of Iron and Steel*, p. 60.

[27] *Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads*, p. 6.

[28] F. J. Schlink and Arthur Kallet, *One Hundred Million Guinea Pigs;* Stuart Chase and F. J. Schlink, *Your Money's Worth.* See also *Social Planning for Canada*, Chap. XVIII.

deed it may be doubted whether "free consumers' choice" in any real sense now exists in the civilized world except in the imaginations of the professional apologists of capitalism.

Prices are the regulators of capitalist production. To say that they are no longer self-adjusting, that they do not "happen" but are "made," may seem to suggest that those who control prices can do what they please with the whole system — even to the extent of gathering figs from thistles. But a moment's reflection will show the fallacy of this. Monopoly capitalism is certainly very different from competitive capitalism, but it is still capitalism, still governed by money demand and the necessity of making a profit. The freedom of the monopoly capitalist is freedom within the limits of capitalism. His power, great as it is, is held upon the stern condition that it can be used only for capitalist ends. If he tries to use it otherwise he eliminates himself.

What is important about the disappearance of the free market and automatic pricing is its relation to the practicability of social planning. As long as the mechanism was automatic there was some point in a statement like that of B. M. Anderson, economist of the Chase National Bank: "I do not believe that . . . government could work out a conscious control of the economic life of a great people which would approach in efficiency the unconscious, automatic control which free markets and freely changing prices give." [29] There is no point in it now. The choice between socialism and capitalism is no longer one between planning and an automatic (hence, presumably, fool-proof and knave-proof) system. It is a choice between two kinds of planning: *capitalist* planning, as yet piecemeal, haphazard and imperfectly developed, but clear enough in its main outlines — planning by capitalists for capitalists, without effective responsibility to the community, planning for scarcity; and

[29] Quoted in *Financial Post,* May 30, 1936.

socialist planning, by responsible public servants for the common good, planning for abundance.

The question remains, however: Can we solve the economic problem within the framework of capitalism? Two schools of thought say yes. One proposes to restore the free market; the other, rejecting this as neither possible nor desirable, advocates "controlled capitalism."

The former need not detain us long. Competition destroyed itself, and the attempts to restore it have been almost uniformly unsuccessful. Nor is there any prospect in any country of a serious effort to restore it. The most that is even faintly likely to result from "back to the market" campaigns is some relatively slight reduction in tariffs, a few further half-hearted essays in "trust-busting," and some whittling down of social legislation. No one seriously expects to see any government in the world abolish its tariff, break up the monopolies within its jurisdiction, repeal all its social legislation, and in general adopt a policy of inflexible adherence to the teaching of the Manchester School. The business leaders who clamour for government to "let business alone" would die of fright if any government took them at their word. For it is not only factory acts, workmen's compensation, old age pensions, minimum wage laws and public utility commissions which would disappear; it is also tariff protection, loans, guarantees, subsidies and bounties and half a hundred other government services and aids to business. Laissez faire is dead. "All the king's horses and all the king's men can't put Humpty-Dumpty together again." No one really wants to. What the chambers of commerce want is to have governments provide the carefully regulated atmosphere in which "business" will thrive, to "interfere" and "control" just so far and in just such ways as will allow "business" to make the highest profit it can.

III. Why "Controlled Capitalism" Is No Solution

"Controlled capitalism" is more plausible. To this type the economic systems of all capitalist countries are now approximating. It has four main features:

(1) "Self-government in industry": state-approved, even state-organized, combines or associations of producers, "producers' monopolies," enforcing their decrees through the state's legal machinery, and regulated by the state. This was already highly developed in Germany before the nazis came into power and has been carried much farther under their rule. Mussolini's fascist corporations, the A.A.A., the N.R.A. code authorities, and in Great Britain the Cunard-White Star merger, the agricultural marketing schemes, the railway amalgamations, and the still incomplete reorganizations of the coal, iron and steel, and shipbuilding industries are further examples. Recent Canadian legislation provides for "compulsory co-operation" between the country's two great railway systems,[30] among producers of natural products,[31] "the recognition and regulation of monopoly" and "the granting of powers of self-government" in situations where competition "cannot be restored" or "seems to be undesirable."[32] Comprehensive phrases! The forms of organization and their professed purposes are not, of course, identical, but the similarities are unmistakable.

(2) State subsidies, loans and guarantees to private business on an unprecedented scale. In the United States the activities of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and similar organizations provide conspicuous illustrations.[33]

[30] The Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act, 1933.

[31] The Natural Products Marketing Act, 1934.

[32] *Report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads,* pp. 266–68.

[33] Hacker, *Short History of the New Deal,* p. 61; Stolberg and Vinton, *Economic Consequences of the New Deal,* pp. 24, 28.

British industry under the "National" government has wallowed in subsidies.[34] Germany, the classic land of subsidies, in the first two years of Hitler's rule spent fifteen billion or sixteen billion marks in this way.[35] The French government similarly rescues the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique from financial embarrassment. Finally we have the Italians, in the admiring words of Paul Einzig, "relieving investors of their holdings [of depreciated bank and industrial securities] by government securities which at a time of crisis command more confidence."[36]

(3) Social legislation, and

(4) Public ownership and operation of an increasing number of industries and services — both too familiar to need illustration.

Obviously the economic structures of fascist and non-fascist capitalist countries differ only in degree. Both express the same "idea": capitalism subordinated to "state control" in the public interest; or, in more attractive phrasing, "state control of industry, in the public interest, but preserving individual initiative and enterprise." To the idealist there is nothing in the *economics* of fascism which is not wholly admirable. For, he assures us, if the state controls, ownership does not matter:[37] we have already secured everything of value in socialism, and that without any economic dislocation or even political strife. "Economically considered," says Paul Einzig, "fascism *is* socialism."[38] Christopher Dawson echoes him, calling Mussolini's corporations "nationalization" of industry.[39] Mr. Hankin and Principal

[34] Strachey, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis.*

[35] O. D. Tolischus, special correspondent of *New York Times* and *Montreal Gazette. Montreal Gazette,* May 7, 1935. Official figures not published.

[36] *Economic Foundations of Fascism* (Macmillan Co. of Canada).

[37] Francis Hankin and T. W. L. MacDermot, *Recovery by Control.*

[38] *Op. cit.*

[39] *Religion and the Modern State.*

MacDermot[40] would, of course, repudiate fascism, but they imply that if we will only be patient, capitalism will gradually transform itself, painlessly and imperceptibly, into socialism; and since they wrote, events have apparently strengthened their case. Even ownership seems likely ultimately to pass to the state: has not Mussolini just taken over all the large Italian industries? Has not Great Britain its Central Electricity Board, its post office telephones and its London Passenger Transport Board; the United States its T.V.A.; and Canada its Canadian National Railways and its "Hydros"? Controlled capitalism, therefore, is either just as good as socialism, or better; or almost the same thing as socialism and in process of development into exactly the same thing.

These cheerful conclusions, however, suffer from one fatal defect: they dissociate ideas from the material realities to which they are supposed to refer. This is the characteristic vice of idealism, which leads Professor Macmurray to describe it as "a pathological condition of the human mind." The idealist is so enchanted by the phrase "state control" that it never occurs to him to inquire into the material nature of the control or the material ends which it actually serves. It hardly even occurs to him that there can be more than one kind of "state control." He is often puzzled by the socialist's insistence that though both socialism and fascism do involve "state control" they are not the same, but opposites.

In a capitalist society, what is "the state"? What is "the public interest"? "The state" suggests a majestic, superhuman, almost supernatural Authority, impartial and unbiased; "the public interest," something far above any particular interests, identified with none of them, or at the very least a "just" balance of private interests determined

[40] *Op. cit.*

by the "impartial" state. But does any one who has studied, or still better, taken part in, the actual process of tariff-making, for example, believe this? Will any one pretend that the economic policies of any capitalist government are made in heaven, or worked out in the calm of the economist's study? The founders of the American and Canadian constitutions certainly did not think so, as Professor Beard [41] and Professor Underhill [42] have conclusively shown. Have idealist political scientists ever heard of anything so material as campaign funds? "Tell us what you want and we will give you what you need," said Sir John Macdonald to the Canadian manufacturers in the early days of their industrial revolution, or, reflectively, "The politician is the little boy who climbs the tree to shake down acorns to the hogs below."

Governments register the results of battles and bargains among economic interests of unequal strength. Under capitalism, whether fascist or democratic, the strongest interests are capitalist interests. Fascism, by suppressing the free labour movement, increases this predominance. But in either case, for the most part *government is business*. As Sir Edward Beatty put it to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, with an accuracy probably unconscious, "We have long ago passed the stage . . . where we feared the oppression of the state — for we long ago learned that we were the state." [43] The history of section 7a of the N.R.A. illustrated the same point.

Under capitalism "the public interest" gets served only when and as far as it happens to coincide with the interest of the dominant class. It is not hard for economists to prove that tariff protection is as little to the interest of Great

[41] *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States.*

[42] "The Development of National Political Parties in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, Dec., 1935.

[43] Speech at Winnipeg, Sept. 11, 1934.

Britain as a whole now as it was in 1846. Why then did Britain go Free Trade in 1846 and Protectionist in 1931? For the excellent reason that Free Trade suited the book of the dominant class in 1846 but had ceased to do so by 1931.

The growth of public ownership is in apparent, but only apparent, contradiction to this. Capitalism has had excellent material reasons for establishing most of such public ownership as we have. This does not, of course, imply that conscious intention was always present. On the contrary, much of the development has taken place rather against professed public policy. But we may be sure that if the existing degree and type of public ownership did not serve the purpose of "business" tolerably well, it would not last long.

What are these capitalist reasons for the increase in public ownership? In the first place, "business" has graciously permitted the state to undertake essential but unprofitable services. This is one reason for public operation of roads, canals, education, some railways, some post offices and some telephone systems. Second, capitalists in general dare not allow a single group of enterprisers to control education, water supply, sanitation, the collection of revenue, the post office, highways, harbours, the police, the army and navy, and in most European countries, railways (which are also essential parts of the defence services). Similar considerations help to explain the existence of "Hydro" in Ontario, which has no coal or oil of its own. Third, the state has been called on, as in the conspicuous example of the Canadian National Railways, to take over bankrupt private enterprises for the benefit of the investors. Fourth, the exigencies of public finance have brought into being many state monopolies in the manufacture, or more often distribution, of salt, matches, tobacco and liquor. State monopolies from the capitalist point of view may sometimes be a lesser evil than increased taxation of incomes and inheritances.

Moreover, just as there are different kinds of "state control" in general, so there are different kinds of public ownership. When an industry is taken over by the state with a guarantee of a substantial fixed return to its security-holders for ever, it is publicly owned only in name. The Canadian National Railways, for instance, are accurately described by the late Prime Minister of Canada as "not the property of the people of Canada" but of "the investors."[44] The government operates the system in effect as trustee for the bond-holders. In general, as Sir Edward Beatty of the Canadian Pacific Railway phrases it: "The publicly owned utilities are not, in any economic sense, owned by the state at all. They are owned by . . . a special class of private investors who are, by the state, and at the expense of the public, protected against the ordinary risk of investments."[45] As long as there is a good chance of big profits, capitalists will prefer to take the risks. Whenever that chance disappears they tend to prefer to sell out to the state in return for a guaranteed future income.

What the gradual evolution of capitalism has given us is *state-capitalist* public ownership: ownership by the state for the benefit of capitalists; and that is what it will continue to give us, only more so. Not even government ownership of all industry would necessarily mean socialism. If the former private owners are given, and allowed to keep, full compensation, industry will still be run mainly on capitalist lines. Earning the bond interest would be the primary object of the management, and its labour policy would differ only in degree from that of any private concern.

In other words, the essential thing about controlled capitalism is that it is still capitalism, and as such, whether in

[44] *Canadian House of Commons Debates*, 1933, pp. 2854–59.

[45] Speech to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Winnipeg, Sept. 11, 1934.

the form of self-government in industry or state-capitalist public ownership, inevitably a scarcity economy.

That is one reason why controlled capitalism, whether democratic or fascist, cannot solve the economic problem. There are at least two others.

The economic theory of the trade cycle is one of the most complex and least satisfactory parts of economic science. There is no space to discuss it here.[46] Some economists hold that crises are inherent in capitalism, some do not; the weight even of orthodox economic opinion is inclining more and more to the former view. But the practical conclusions of both schools come to much the same thing; for the measures which, according to some economists, would enable capitalism to avoid depressions, are such as no capitalist government could conceivably adopt. Nor have the more thoroughly controlled capitalist economies been appreciably more successful than others in escaping the rigours of depression. The best that they can show is some slight mitigation of its hardships.[47] No serious economist expects to see capitalism rid itself of the trade cycle.

Worse than the trade cycle, however, is the long-period decline in the rate of capitalist expansion, whose crucial importance non-Marxian economists are only beginning to realize. "We live," wrote Professor Lionel Robbins in 1933, "not in the fourth but in the nineteenth year of the world crisis."[48] The *League of Nations World Economic Survey* says that from 1860 to 1913 production increased with remarkable regularity of trend. "If the line of trend is extended to 1932 the rather startling conclusion is reached that the index of world production, on the hypothesis that nothing had occurred to alter its regular upward trend . . . would

[46] For a careful discussion, see Strachey, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis.*

[47] See the voluminous economic statistics published by the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization.

[48] *The Great Depression* (The Macmillan Co.), p. 1.

to-day be twice as great as it actually is."[49] Down to the end of the Great War, capitalist expansion took place fast enough to absorb, in the long run, all or nearly all the workers displaced by technological advance. Since 1920, we have seen for the first time large-scale unemployment even in boom years.

The early capitalists had the world at their feet: cheap labour, rich virgin natural resources, foreign tariffs hopelessly inadequate to stem the tide of cheap, machine-made goods. But the growth of competing national capitalisms has checked the expansion of export markets; organization of labour and exhaustion of the more accessible natural resources have raised costs; the democratic electorate demands more and more "expensive" health and safety legislation and social services; the development of monopoly restricts the home market. We are "recovering" from the depression, but unemployment and standards of living remain almost stationary. The only impressive recovery is in profits.[50] It is significant that the financial press congratulates us on getting back to the level of business activity that prevailed in 1923–25, or in 1926, or in 1929. It says little or nothing of the subsequent increase in population and in productivity per worker which ought to mean a far greater volume of business than in any of these "normal" years.

It is the conflict between the steadily growing demands of the democratic electorate and the declining ability of capitalism which is pressing democratic capitalist countries in the direction of fascism. But fascism has no solution for the economic problem, for fascism is simply capitalism without democracy, "capitalism gone nudist." Fascism can only

[49] Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[50] The number of persons on relief in Canada in May, 1936, was 1,244,951, as against 1,277,464 in May, 1935. The *Financial Post* of June 20, 1936, estimated that total dividends of Canadian companies in 1936 would reach $200,000,000, second only to the all-time record of $284,000,000 in 1930.

continue, in harsher forms, the same cutting of costs (wages and social services), the same restriction of production, the same imposition upon the masses of a standard of living far below what is technologically possible, the same increasing inequality of wealth. It is becoming more and more apparent, on the other hand, that the Soviet Union is succeeding in building a new society, where the whole produce of labour belongs to the workers collectively, where unemployment and restriction of production are unknown, and where the standard of living is rising. How long can the world continue economically "half slave and half free"?

EUGENE FORSEY

VI

A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

I. The Achievement of Co-operatives

If capitalism cannot solve the economic problem and socialism, in the Soviet Union, is actually doing so, it seems clear that capitalism must sooner or later make way for another system on a different basis. But must that other system be socialist? Or does the co-operative movement offer an alternative to both capitalism and socialism?

In the United States and Canada this question is not without practical importance. North America hitherto has been relatively untouched by the co-operative movement: the triumphs of capitalism, until 1929, were too dazzling. With the disillusionment of the last seven years, however, has come a changed attitude. Mr. Marquis Childs' readable little book *Sweden, the Middle Way,* a new edition of Dr. Warbasse's *Co-operative Democracy,* the remarkable work of St. Francis Xavier University in eastern Nova Scotia, and, perhaps most of all, the visit of Dr. Kagawa, have together given co-operation a considerable vogue, especially among church people. It has accordingly become essential for radical Christians to understand what co-operation is, what

it has achieved, and its possibilities and limitations. In the process the main lines of the structure of a new economic order will become clear.

The fundamental principles of co-operation, whether producers' or consumers', are simple. First, each society is democratically controlled: one member, one vote (*not* one share, one vote as in the capitalist corporation). Second, earnings are distributed on a "patronage" basis: "dividends" are proportional to the amount of business each member does with his society — in a consumers' co-operative, for example, proportional to the amount each member buys from his society. Capital usually comes from a small initiation fee, from a limited number of small "shares" held only by members and paying a low fixed interest, and from earnings reinvested in the business.

The distinction between producers' and consumers' co-operatives is not one of what they do — either type might run a lobster cannery, for example — but one of ownership and control. The consumers' societies, besides their merchandizing activities, often engage in production, sometimes on a very large scale, but the ownership and control rest wholly with the consumers, not at all with the employees. The most successful producers' societies have been organized by farmers and fishermen for the processing or marketing of their produce or the buying of their supplies; here, of course, ownership and control belong entirely to the producers.

Both sections of the movement have an impressive record of solid practical achievement in many countries. In Great Britain the societies have a membership of over 7,000,000, which, with dependents, means about half the population. With almost 300,000 employees, a capital of over £150,000,000, and net earnings of more than £25,000,000, they form the largest single distributive business in the country and

the only business which grew steadily throughout the depression. They are the largest dealers in butter, sugar, bacon and dried fruits in the British Empire, the world's largest buyers of Canadian wheat. They operate the largest shoe factories and flour mills in Great Britain and the largest tea business in the world, with 35,000 acres of tea plantations. Their co-operative insurance society writes most of the industrial life and accident insurance in Great Britain; their bank has assets of £81,000,000 and deposits and withdrawals of over £700,000,000 yearly. They operate over two hundred factories and productive industries. In Denmark more than half the total trade and almost a fifth of the retail trade is co-operative.[1] Of the dairies and bacon slaughterhouses more than four-fifths are co-operative.[2]

Co-operatives do three-quarters of all the business in Iceland, one-third in Finland, and forty per cent of the consumers' goods business in Sweden. The largest Swedish flour mills are owned by the co-operative wholesale societies. The Swedish movement has fought and defeated the domestic flour and rubber trusts and the international electric lamp trust. Stockholm has over 80,000 persons in co-operative homes; Gothenburg, nearly half its population. Co-operative credit associations throughout the world now number 50,000,000 members with an annual business of $15,000,000,000.[3] These are only some of the more striking figures, and even these give only a slight notion of what co-operation has done for millions of ordinary people in a score of countries. But they are enough to show that it works and works well and on a large scale.[4]

[1] J. P. Warbasse, *Co-operative Democracy* (Harpers), pp. 31, 32, 42.

[2] M. Digby, *Producers and Consumers*, p. 47.

[3] Warbasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–45, 67, 71, 76.

[4] For further information see Warbasse, *op. cit.;* Childs, *op. cit.;* Digby, *op. cit.;* Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The Consumers' Co-operative Movement;* the books cited in Jerome Davis, *Contemporary Social Movements;* etc.

It seems evident to certain enthusiasts that co-operation is already building a new economic structure within the decaying walls of the old, that we have only to go on assiduously organizing co-operatives until finally the free democratic economy is all-inclusive and the last vestiges of capitalism quietly disappear. There is no conflict or turmoil or unpleasantness: capitalism just "withers away." In this view, of course, political activity is superfluous except in the form of gentle, persuasive pressure upon governments to remove the legal obstacles to co-operative development. Co-operation seems the painless substitute for socialism: colourless, odourless, guaranteed not to irritate the tenderest skin.

Is this view correct? Are there no limitations upon the further development of co-operation? Beyond question co-operatives can play a large and valuable part in the change from capitalism to a new order and within the new order when the change is complete. But it does not follow that co-operation alone can bring in the new order, still less that the new order will be wholly co-operative. Within capitalist society the further development of co-operatives is definitely and seriously limited. It will still be limited, though less seriously and for different reasons, in at least the early stages of a non-capitalist society.

II. The Limitations of Co-operatives

The first limitation results from the fact that capitalism is no longer competitive but monopolistic. Broadly speaking, the great triumphs of co-operation have been won either in countries where it got a firm foothold at a fairly early stage of capitalist development, as in Great Britain; or in countries which lay rather on the fringe than at the centre of that development, as in Ireland, Scandinavia and pre-revolutionary Russia; or among the agricultural population

of the more advanced capitalist countries. 1936 is not 1844. Where the Rochdale pioneers had to compete with the corner grocery their modern Canadian or American counterparts usually face the nation-wide chain or department store. The difficulty may not be insuperable — buying clubs perhaps offer a way around it — but it is formidable. Similarly any important industrial enterprises which co-operatives may undertake on this continent will have to fight not the small individual or family business but giant corporations. Only in exceptional cases can they hope for success. Agricultural marketing and processing associations have a better chance, but their power to secure substantial advantages for their members is severely restricted by the enormous bargaining strength of the great corporations to which they must usually sell, and often also by the price-cutting of non-co-operative producers. Credit unions are subject, as we shall see, to other limitations inherent in their special position.

A second general limitation of the co-operative movement emerges clearly from its own experience. Whether in merchandizing or production it has been concerned almost exclusively with consumers' goods.[5] Nor is this accident. In the first place, the demand for producers' goods — coal, steel, machinery and other "heavy industry" products — fluctuates much more violently with the cycle of booms and depressions than the demand for consumers' goods. The marked stability of co-operative business is due very largely to its wise caution in staying out of fields where the demand is unstable. It is significant that Dr. Warbasse mentions only one co-operative coal mine (and that a producer of anthracite, a consumers' good), still more significant that he adds, "But production outside of England has not been developed co-operatively to any considerable degree in this precarious industry."[6] Under capitalism, with its recurrent

[5] Warbasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–89.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88.

depressions, it is not safe for the small consumers or producers who make up the co-operative movement to risk their capital in such undertakings. In the second place, the fixed capital (plant and machinery) involved in the heavy industries and public utilities is relatively much greater than in the production of consumers' goods. Accordingly most heavy industries tend to be, and public utilities are, "natural monopolies," in which competition is ruinously expensive and sometimes — as with competing power, gas or telephone systems — an intolerable nuisance as well. If the demand were stable enough and if we were starting with a clean sheet, that is, with no capitalist industries already in the field, there seems no inherent reason why co-operatives could not operate heavy industries and public utilities quite satisfactorily. But the demand under capitalism cannot be stable and we are not starting with a clean sheet. The great capitalist corporations are there already; co-operatives could only compete with them and the chief probable result would be enormously to enhance the costs of the goods and services in question — a poor gift to the consumers!

The implications of this situation cut very deep. First, and most obviously, as long as capitalism controls the heavy industries and public utilities it has the co-operative movement largely at its mercy. Second, it is a familiar fact that one of the main causes of war is the struggle of rival national capitalisms to secure preferred access to raw materials, markets and fields of investment *especially for the heavy industries*.[7] Co-operation simply does not touch this problem,

[7] Sir Norman Angell has made much of the fact that any country can in peace time get all the raw materials it will pay for, that the raw material producing countries are only too anxious to sell. But he would be the first to admit that a country can buy only if it is able to sell; that tariffs and currency manipulation by the raw material producing countries may restrict its exports; and that therefore control of their government may be worth fighting for.

which is crucial. Third, we have seen in Chapter V that the automatic mechanism of the competitive economy has broken down and cannot be restored; that controlled capitalism, far from solving the problem, makes it worse; that social planning is essential. Planning without control of the producers' goods industries, power and transportation, is impossible. The co-operative movement cannot get that control; hence its utter inadequacy to the central task of bringing in a new order.

Rather similar considerations apply to finance. Co-operatives have indeed entered this field, and on a rather important scale, through credit unions (or co-operative banks) and insurance societies. But these are in the main associations for mutual self-help among the relatively poor. They do not, in any country, exercise any appreciable influence upon the monetary system or control any important part of the supply of capital. Again the reason is clear: the great capitalist enterprises got in first and are certainly strong enough, at least under capitalist governments, to keep the co-operatives out. Again, also, the implications are decisive. For it is as plain as a pikestaff that you cannot plan unless you control the monetary system and the direction of investment, the allocation of capital among the various industries and services. Indeed it is becoming abundantly clear that not even capitalism can long survive without some state control of money and investment; for it is generally agreed that depressions have something to do with changes in the price level and therefore with banking policy, and a great deal to do with discrepancies between "savings" and "investment" (the actual use of savings in production), and perhaps with the direction of investment into particular industries. Precisely what capitalism should do about it is a matter of acute controversy among capitalist economists,

but there is general agreement that it cannot go on letting people invest what they please where they please.[8] To all these problems co-operation is not even relevant.[9]

Even the continued existence of co-operation itself is threatened by the pressure towards fascism inherent, as we have seen, in monopoly capitalism. In Great Britain the "National" government has seriously hampered the movement by taxing its "dividends," which are really of course not profits but rebates on purchases. In Austria and Italy co-operation was among the first victims of fascism. The Austrian co-operatives, thanks to the government's precarious position, have recently recovered their autonomy, and the Italian movement has emerged from persecution into the comparative calm of fascist "control," whatever that means. Dr. Warbasse speaks of the German movement almost entirely in the past tense, concluding pathetically with: "Can naziism . . . survive long enough for the people to forget their Rochdale co-operative system? This will require at least the lifetime of one generation."[10] In North America where governments and even some capitalists are at the moment, for reasons which we shall see, favourably disposed or at least benevolently neutral, the co-operative movement as such is probably wise to avoid for the time being any corporate participation in politics. But just as the power of the monopoly capitalist state can harass and cripple and ultimately (in its fully developed form, the fascist state) destroy the trade union movement, so it can

[8] For careful and critical summaries, see Strachey, *The Coming Struggle for Power* and *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis;* and Barbara Wootton, *Plan or no Plan?*

[9] The "recovery" of Sweden, exaggerated reports of which have rather embarrassed the Swedish government, is largely the result of skilful monetary policy and the boom in armaments, neither of which has anything to do with co-operatives.

[10] Warbasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–39, 45–46.

harass, cripple and destroy the co-operative movement. Co-operators who imagine that their movement can survive in any effective form if they remain neutral in politics are as foolish as those trade unionists who harbour the same illusion. The great corporations, as the experience of both Mr. Roosevelt and the British Labour Party has shown, are strong enough to bend or break any government which makes even a faint attempt to thwart their will in any matter they think important.

III. Co-operatives and the Class Structure of Capitalist Society

There are, however, much more fundamental reasons than any of these why co-operation cannot be a substitute for socialism. They lie in the essential nature of capitalism and capitalist society.

Capitalism necessarily divides society into two classes: capitalist and working class or proletariat. The capitalists, because they control the means of production (plant, machinery, materials, natural resources), dominate the situation. For the working class controls nothing but its own labour power; labour power without means of production can produce nothing; therefore the working man must starve or subsist on meagre "charity" or relief, unless he can sell his labour power to some capitalist. The existence of groups intermediate between the two classes does not affect the substantial truth of these statements: the professions are on the whole economically bound to the capitalist class, the "white collar" workers and the farmers are becoming economically proletarianized.[11] Between the working class and those who control the means of production there exists an irreconcilable conflict.

[11] For further discussion, see Chap. IX, "The Marxist Challenge."

Why irreconcilable? Surely with a little reasonableness and good will the interests of capital and labour may be "harmonized" or "balanced"?

No.

In the first place, the working class can never be secure or free (there is no real freedom without economic security) until it controls the means of production, and the two classes cannot control the same thing at the same time.

In the second place, human labour is the only creative agent in the economic process, the sole source of wealth. The means of production themselves are the result of the application of human energy to natural resources. But labour neither individually (which as Marx pointed out is impossible) nor collectively gets the whole product of the economic process. A large part goes, as the orthodox capitalist economist puts it, to the passive factors, capital and natural resources; or in *real* terms to their *owners,* who *as owners* have taken no part in the productive process but simply by virtue of their ownership hold the workers to ransom. Income from ownership, therefore, is simply the product of the unpaid labour of the workers.[12] Some owners of course work and derive a part of their income from their work. But the increasing separation between ownership and management is making the attempts to "justify" profit, interest and economic "rent"[13] as "wages of management" more and more ludicrous.

This return to ownership Marx called "surplus value." Like "class" it is not a theory but a fact. Exploitation is not an excrescence on capitalism. It *is* capitalism.[14] The

[12] For an admirable statement of the much misunderstood Marxian account of surplus value see Strachey, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis.*

[13] That is, payment to the owner of natural resources simply because he is the owner. What is ordinarily called "rent" may include other elements.

[14] Again it is a question not of judging but of understanding. Most of those who live on the revenue from investments are unconscious of exploita-

truth is that rich and poor, secure and insecure, do not really belong to the same community at all. Their whole emotional and moral attitudes are different. If we deny the fact of class struggle we are indulging in sheer idealism. As long as people in both classes go on thinking and feeling as if classes didn't exist there is no hope of doing anything about it. In other words, we shall never get real, substantial democracy, democracy in which men and women are really, substantially, that is, *in their concrete life,* free and equal, as long as we go on thinking that we have a democracy already. The first thing necessary to achieve real democracy, therefore, is class-consciousness. As long as people are not class-conscious, classes will persist. When we become class-conscious it will be possible to bring classes to an end and establish real community, mutuality, genuinely personal relationships on a universal scale in the classless society.[15]

Yet Dr. Warbasse calmly remarks that " co-operation at the most would only slowly and partially supplant but not necessarily displace private business. The actual existence of profit business by the side of co-operation is highly desirable as a challenge to keep the co-operative movement up to its best "; [16] and he is by no means the only prominent co-operator who thinks in these terms. The opinions even of a dozen leading co-operators on this point would not, of course, prove that co-operation has no answer to the problem of class. But what is decisive is the perfectly obvious fact that the co-operative movement has not in any highly indus-

tion. Many — aged or disabled persons, minors, educational or charitable institutions — have, under capitalism, no other means of security. All are caught in the meshes of a situation from which *individual* escape is probably impossible. But that does not alter the fact that they are living on the proceeds of other people's labour.

[15] The substance and most of the language of this paragraph are from notes of a lecture by Professor John Macmurray at Belleville, Ontario, June 26, 1936.

[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 109.

trialized country, even in Great Britain where it comprises about half the population, gone any appreciable distance towards abolishing poverty or produced any perceptible effect on the class structure of society. It is significant too that the Webbs, who are unquestionably among the leading authorities on co-operatives and warmly in sympathy with the movement, are socialists. Like all intelligent socialists they would agree that co-operatives, if they recognize their limitations, may do much to help bring in socialism, and may perform very important functions in the socialist community where they could provide stimulating competition for state enterprise. But apart from the socialist movement co-operation cannot realize its own aims.

The precise task of co-operatives in the social revolution is threefold. First, they can help to finance strikes, as they have done on a large scale in Great Britain.[17] Second, they can provide visible proof that a non-capitalist economy is workable. Third, if they are kept in their right perspective, they can help to initiate the more conservative elements in the community (which in North America would include most of the working class, farmers, white collar workers and technicians) into the principles, practice, and mental and emotional attitudes of a non-capitalist economy.

In America, where the trade union and socialist movements are weak and the co-operative movement is in its infancy, there is danger that co-operation will be separated from its socialist context and exploited for capitalist ends. A great many people, especially in the churches, are just beginning to awaken to social consciousness. Left to themselves, they may start to do something about it, with unpleasant results for the capitalist class. To put them back to sleep is impossible. The only thing that might be done is to sidetrack them. If they can be persuaded to expend their

[17] Warbasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–98.

energy in a way that will make them *think* they are doing something fundamental when in fact they are not, all may yet be well, for a time anyhow. Co-operation is still weak and politically neutral. It can make working class income go farther without touching the income of the capitalist class. What better device could any one invent for heading off socialism?

Co-operation is already being used in precisely this way. The most obvious illustration is of course the prostitution of the word itself, as in a recent speech by a prominent Canadian business man who described the leading capitalist businesses of his country as really great co-operative institutions. This is so patently silly as to be nearly harmless. Less obvious, and therefore more dangerous, is the effort of several capitalist propagandists [18] and some co-operators [19] to present co-operation as simply "intelligent capitalism" or a new and better form of "private property." But most dangerous of all are the seductive voices which say: "Why raise fundamental issues at all? Here is a method of solving social problems almost by inadvertence."

Unless co-operators understand and face these dangers and relate their movement to the fundamental issues as a part of the socialist movement, it may well become (like "social credit" and certain religious cults which talk solely in terms of changed individual lives) a haven of those who want "not a solution of the social problem but a cheap solution, a solution which will really change nothing." The sentimental enthusiasm for Sweden and Dr. Kagawa and St. Francis Xavier University among people who *don't want fundamental change and would stand to lose by it,* is ominous. The chair at one of Dr. Kagawa's meetings in Montreal was

[18] As in a recent pamphlet anonymously printed and circulated in Montreal.

[19] Warbasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–11.

taken by a prominent and very vocal textile magnate. To those who know the level of wages, the labour policy and the general social outlook of the Canadian textile industry, no comment is necessary.[20]

IV. The Necessity of Socialism

There is no cheap solution of the problem of social reconstruction. There is no escaping the cross. The devil of social injustice goeth not out but by grappling with the fundamental issues. This generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given it but the sign of the prophet Marx. Until Christians learn to understand and apply the lessons of Marxism they cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven — nor, probably, can any one else.

Only the capture of political power and the transfer to the state of at least the main industries and services now in capitalist hands can bring in the new economic order. The new society must be socialist through and through.

To discuss fully what this means would require a volume in itself.[21] What is important here is to point out a few things it does not mean.

In the first place it does not mean socialization of any one's fountain pen or shirts or dresses or pyjamas. It is private property in the *means of production,* not private property in consumers' goods, that socialism is concerned with. It requires no very strenuous intellectual effort to see a difference between ownership of a hat and ownership of bonds and shares (though many capitalist propagandists seem to find

[20] Dr. Kagawa himself, of course, would repudiate the probably unconscious exploitation of which, during his recent tour, he was some times the victim.

[21] See *Social Planning for Canada;* also G. R. Mitchison, *The First Workers' Government* (the Socialist League's plan for Britain); and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism.*

the distinction beyond their powers). The latter necessarily involves exploitation; the former does not.

Second, socialism does not mean state-capitalist public ownership,[22] burdening publicly owned industry with a perpetual tribute to the former private owners; this, as we have already explained, is not socialization at all. On the other hand, it does not mean confiscation. No socialist government could socialize even all the main industries overnight, and there is no ground for discriminating among capitalists in different industries. Nor is there any reason for depriving educational and charitable institutions and children, the aged and the disabled, of any reasonable security which capitalism gives them. The sensible way to deal with the problem is to compensate on the basis of "prudent investment" value,[23] in the form either of terminable annuities or of government securities bearing a small fixed rate of interest and a further return varying with an index of prosperity.[24] Then, by steeply graduated income taxes if annuities are the form of compensation chosen, or income and inheritance taxes if the other form is used, take back from the rich former owners all but the modest amount necessary to reasonable security. This would, of course, at the same time preserve the security of the groups and institutions mentioned above. Such a policy secures all the important results of outright confiscation without arraying the whole mass of small savers on the side of reaction. It should be noted that compensation does not involve any problem of finding money to pay off the capitalists.

Third, socialism in the United States and Canada does not mean nationalization of land. Agriculture can be fitted into a socially planned system without touching the security of

[22] See the previous chapter.

[23] That is, on the basis of cash actually put in and prudently, not wastefully, spent; this of course excludes "water," "good will," etc.

[24] Cf., that constructed for Germany, under the Dawes Plan.

the farmer on his farm. Indeed socialism would give the farmer real security instead of the empty shell of security which is often all he has at present.

Fourth, socialism does not mean operation of industry by "politicians" or civil servants. The notion that socialized industries would be run on post office lines exists only in the heated imaginations of capitalist propagandists and their dupes. Socialized industries would in fact be administered not by government departments but by responsible autonomous boards of directors — appointed by the government (probably from panels drawn up by the trade unions, technicians' associations and the co-operatives), carrying out a policy defined in its general lines by the community and answerable to the community for the results; but free within the limits of the national plan to conduct the management with a single eye to efficiency, free from what we ordinarily call "political" interference, patronage and the like.[25]

V. The Feasibility of Socialism

At this point some one is sure to object that governments and public enterprises are corrupt. Of course they are, more or less. That is the common fate of all institutions in capitalist society and it would be very surprising if political institutions had escaped it. But what is the main source of corruption in politics? Read the *Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* or the official records of any major political scandals in the United States or Canada. The invariable themes are contracts, franchises, subsidies, tariff increases, grants of land or water power or other natural resources, guarantees of securities. Public men and political parties are corrupted by capitalist business for capitalist business. But if we

[25] For careful discussion of details of this question see "Ingot," *The Socialization of Iron and Steel;* and *Social Planning for Canada.*

eliminate private enterprise from all the important industries and services, who, as a distinguished Canadian socialist[26] pertinently asks, will bribe whom and for what? Do the heads of different departments of the same corporation, or different departments of the same government for that matter, habitually bribe one another? Petty graft there may easily be in any system, but under socialism the *raison d'être* of graft on a large scale disappears. Moreover, in a society where banking, insurance and all the chief industries are owned by the state or co-operatives, it is not easy to see how the grafter could dispose of his ill-gotten gains without being found out.

Finally there is the bogey that a socialist economy will fall to pieces because workers will not work unless goaded by fear, nor business men organize and direct except from greed. The obvious Christian comment on this is that if it is true, "we may as well give up preaching the gospel of Christ." But it is not true.

As applied to the worker it is an absurdity. It amounts to saying that he is less likely to do his best in a plant that belongs to him and his fellows than in one that belongs to some one else. No one, of course, proposes to pay workers for idling. A socialist system, where every one has real opportunity for work, could apply, as capitalism cannot, the apostolic maxim, "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." Besides, socialism provides for wage differentials between fast and slow workers, skilled and unskilled. With these points in mind can any reasonable person really believe that a man hag-ridden by fear of unemployment will work better than one who is freed from that fear? Has any one ever really believed that people work better if they are half fed and half naked? Many workers get less than the wage necessary to maximum efficiency and a growing number feel no obliga-

[26] Professor F. R. Scott of McGill University.

tion to put forth their best efforts to fill an employer's pocket. There is evidence that fear of unemployment, far from stimulating efficiency, rather stimulates workers to make a particular job last as long as possible.[27]

As for technicians and salaried managers, in a socialist economy they have far more to gain than to lose. Their salaries may in some instances be smaller, though in a society with no princely salaries or other incomes this will not matter greatly; but against that must be set their gain "in prestige, in freedom from the necessity of measuring their work by its profit-making value, in better relations with the workers under their control or affected by their work." [28]

But what of the organizing genius, the great business leader? Frankly, we believe that these people's cynical estimate of themselves is, in many instances at least, a libel. "Doctors, artists, engineers, teachers, scientists, civil servants, do their work from a variety of motives: love of the job, pride in good work, desire to do better work than some rival, desire for public recognition and respect, love of country or of humanity. The desire for the 'glittering prizes' of great wealth is only one motive and by no means always the strongest, even in capitalist civilization, which exalts that motive above all others. We decline to believe that the business man is essentially different from other human beings, 'a low, money-grubbing animal' to whom only sordid motives make any appeal. His activity springs from the same varied sources as other people's, much of it from a love of power, a delight in the game, which are perfectly capable of being harnessed for the public good." [29]

The decisive answer to these misgivings about incentives,

[27] Stuart Chase, *The Economy of Abundance,* p. 48, quoting S. B. Mathewson, *Restriction of Output among Unorganized Workers.* See also R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society.*

[28] *Social Planning for Canada,* p. 67.

[29] *Ibid.,* p. 68.

however, is the Soviet Union. Starting with a primitive economy and far less promising human material than ours, it has in less than two decades advanced to a leading place among the industrial nations, its standard of living is steadily rising and it is moving towards political democracy instead of away from it.[30]

It is not a question of whipping up incentives to take the place of the "glittering prizes" but of sweeping away the restrictions which capitalism places upon the spontaneous creative activity which is natural to human beings.

As a recent work puts it, the population of a socialist community "will not be angels but neither will they be demons. They will be ordinary men and women. They will live and work in a society which will give them every encouragement to behave decently instead of offering premiums for 'putting one over' their neighbours; . . . which will no longer preach honesty to its children in church and schoolroom only to 'send them out to be salesmen.' There will be no great corporations . . . to debauch governments and parliaments and public officials and loot the public treasury. Under these conditions our technicians and even our business men . . . should be able to endure the ignominy of serving their country not less faithfully than they would serve the great corporations.

"To those who object that capitalism is 'rooted in human nature,' we answer: Possibly, but so was cannibalism. We no longer eat each other. A civilization is within our grasp in which we shall no longer exploit each other."[31]

The statement of the case in these two chapters necessarily leaves many questions unanswered. So much the

[30] See Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism;* Harry Ward, *In Place of Profit.* For other discussions of the question of incentives see R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society,* and Kirby Page, *Individualism and Socialism.*

[31] *Social Planning for Canada,* p. 69.

better. Two such chapters may perhaps indicate the main lines upon which an understanding of the economic problem and its solution is possible, and, perhaps more important, the lines on which it is not possible; and suggest where more adequate discussions can be found. They should not try to do more. Nothing can absolve those who would build the Christian commonwealth of careful study. Unless they accept that necessity they must resign themselves to seeing their energies wasted in futile efforts to achieve the impossible or, worse, exploited for anti-Christian ends.

J. KING GORDON

VII

THE POLITICAL TASK

THE political task of our generation is that of preventing the rise of the totalitarian state in the remaining democratic countries of the world, and of saving civilization from the devastation of war brought on by the desperate imperialist excursions of the fascist states. In addition, the political task of our generation is the furthering of a state organized to provide economic security and maintain individual liberty. The two tasks are essentially one. For the only sure bulwark against fascism is to be found in the successful organization of the socialized state.

I. Fascism and Liberal Democracy

The fascist or totalitarian state is the significant political phenomenon of a period of economic collapse and social disintegration. Its features have become familiar. In contrast with the political democracy of the West, fascism demands complete subordination of the individual to the interests of the state. The principle of responsible government resting upon the concept of civil liberty is replaced by the principle of authority (*Führer Prinzip*) — as John Gunther puts it in his *Inside Europe,* " authority from the top down, obedience

from the bottom up." In general, the whole concept of freedom is abandoned in favour of the concept of order. The mystical concept of national unity and racial and national destiny is employed to conceal the actualities of class conflict and economic exploitation. The concept of social justice is transmuted into the neo-medieval concept of the corporative state. Dictatorship is an essential feature of fascism, the dictator incarnating in his person the concepts of authority, order and national destiny. In the words of Adolf Hitler, "A majority can never be a substitute for the man."[1]

The nature of the fascist state constitutes a grave menace to Christianity. For fascism is more than a new political philosophy expressing itself in the reorganization of society. The totalitarian claims of fascism make it a religion, commanding the utmost in zeal and devotion from its adherents and branding as heretic any one who ventures to differ with its dogmatic assertions. Like all religions it relies upon symbol and myth to convey a meaning which cannot be reduced to logic. The fasces or the swastika, the black shirt or the brown shirt, the salute and salutation, provide the equivalent of religious symbol or ritual. The myths of race, of national mission, of messianic leadership, are almost exact counterparts of religious mythology, suggesting a reality escaping definition. For this reason, when fascism is established any existing form of religion must fall into a subordinate position.

The menace to Christianity is twofold. In the first place, there is a fundamental challenge to that individual integrity and freedom of conscience which are so basic in the Christian tradition. In the history of the Christian church an interference with the free conscience of the individual or with his sense of obligation to the will of God has always been held to be justifiable ground for resistance, if not for actual revolution. In the second place, fascism, notably in its Germanic

[1] Quoted by John Gunther in *Inside Europe* (Harper and Bros.).

version, has sought to compel Christianity to adapt itself to the racial and national mythus which is an essential part of the fascist creed. The more extreme school of naziism demands the suppression of Christianity in favour of ancient Teutonic paganism, but the dominant insistence is that Christianity become a state religion suited to the promotion of political ends and the cultural objectives of the Third Reich. Karl Polanyi makes the statement: "Victorious Fascism is not only the downfall of the Socialist Movement; it is the end of Christianity in all but its most debased forms."[2] The present desperate situation of the Evangelical churches in Germany would seem to indicate that fascism must be resisted in its incipient stages lest the totalitarian state be revealed as an accomplished fact and the battle be lost before it is begun.

A little later it will be shown how fascism naturally comes to birth in a period of economic decline, when prolonged human distress and the deepening bitterness of class strife give rise to a disillusionment with the efficacy of the democratic process. First, however, we must examine the nature of the presuppositions underlying modern democracy.

The rise of modern democracy covers that long period during which the individual became emancipated from various kinds of authoritarian control. The greatest victories for individual freedom were won in the period when the Middle Ages were drawing to a close. The Reformation marked the end of ecclesiastical authoritarianism in the field of thought and religion and the same period witnessed the rise of the new commercial system closely associated with that of the towns and the opening up of the trade routes to the New World. With the inauguration of the modern economic era there collapsed the entire system of controls which church and

[2] Karl Polanyi, chapter entitled "The Essence of Fascism" in *Christianity and the Social Revolution* (Victor Gollancz, Ltd.).

state exercised over the people's economic relationships. Not until the eighteenth century, when the last remnants of mercantilism were discarded, was the complete emancipation of the economic order achieved. The rise of modern nations marked the beginning of a struggle for the political liberty of the individual culminating in the establishment of the universal franchise in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Democracy, then, presupposed the individual free from superimposed authority in his religious, intellectual, economic and political life. In each of these spheres of activity, of course, a certain degree of order was presumed and a certain principle of authority recognized. But the order was that which corresponded to the order in the natural world and involved the recognition of certain basic principles or laws. Thus in the realm of economics the individual was a free agent, but his actions received their limitation and were saved from being anarchic through the existence of certain invariable and inviolable "economic laws." The authority which persisted in the political field was not incompatible with individual freedom, but was an authority based upon the actively expressed will of the majority. Sovereignty had been transferred from the monarch to the people. It is important to realize, however, that these various spheres of human activity were regarded as autonomous. Each might have its "laws" and its authority; but the authority of one sphere could not be extended to another sphere. Thus no religious authority could be extended to control the field of science, nor could political authority be extended to govern religion, and neither religion nor the state could extend its authority into the autonomous economic realm. Such extension of authority could bring only disaster.

The most complete philosophical justification of this doctrine of autonomy was worked out in the economic realm. In this theory, the free economic man, acknowledging only

the natural laws of the economic order and following only his self-interest, was thought to be guided by an invisible hand in promoting the well-being of all. Thus was the autonomy of the economic order related to the objective of the political order where the ruling principle of good government was held to be the promotion of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." The social history of the nineteenth century is largely the history of the interaction between the utilitarian principle in government and the laissez faire principle in economic life.

The challenge to the principle of laissez faire came not from logic but from facts. In the development of modern industrialism it soon became apparent that the general welfare of society was not being promoted by the free operation of "economic laws." Moreover, economic freedom was seen to be related to the possession of economic power. Certain individuals and groups were free to starve unless they could procure work, and free to enjoy merely a bare subsistence even if work were available. Other individuals and groups were free to enjoy the benefits of a life of plenty even if they chose to remain idle.

This situation called for the intervention of the state in the economic realm in order to promote greater happiness of greater numbers. The doctrine of laissez faire suffered modification. Human rights and liberties were being violated in the process of the irresponsible pursuit of profits by industry and commerce. Workers and consumers were being exploited. Legislation had to be passed for the protection of these weaker economic groups. Moreover, the superior power of the owners of factories and their freedom to associate in the quest for additional gain called for a corresponding organization of effort on the part of workers. After long struggle the right of collective bargaining was won, making it possible for workers to bring some degree of pres-

sure upon industrialists and upon the state.[3] Further, the extension of the franchise made it easier for the general will of the masses of people to express itself to the restraint of the dominant economic groups in the community. The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth marks the organization of this newly gained political power of the masses into labour and socialist parties aimed at destroying the hold of the dominant economic groups and utilizing the forces of the state to promote the economic well-being of the majority.

Equally important, however, in the destruction of the philosophy and practice of laissez faire was the intervention of the rulers of the economic realm in the functions of government. The course of the century witnessed the increasing utilization of economic power to persuade, cajole or intimidate governments into making special concessions to dominant industrial or financial groups. The policy of granting subsidies and tariff protection in return for the monetary support of party organization, or simply on account of the control by industrialists of the democratic machine, is common to all modern capitalist states.

This intervention of government in business, and the equally common intervention of business in government, indicates the end of laissez faire. The form of the state which was evolving by the end of the nineteenth century was one in which there was the closest relationship between the political and the economic order. The economic life of the people had come to be one of the chief concerns of the state. But "economic life of the people" might mean one of two things. It might mean the provision — adequate or inadequate — for economic wants, the provision of food, clothing, fuel, shelter, and those other services which have come to be

[3] Incidentally the English Trade Union Act of 1927 is regarded by many as one of the first signs of a semi-fascist turning back of the clock.

considered a necessary part of civilized living. On the other hand, it might refer to the organization and operation of the industrial system as it functions to provide for the needs or for the profits of its owners. The state has become concerned in the economic life of the people in each of these aspects. The subsequent development of the state will depend upon which of these aspects is stressed to the neglect of the other.

It was the economic crisis which produced the crisis in democracy. For economic crisis has greatly complicated the interrelationship between the state and the economic life of the people. Threatened financial and industrial collapse has led to a marked increase of government aid and subsidy to private industry. This is to be seen in the policy of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation under Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt in the United States. Much of the subsequent New Deal program has also been directed towards the bringing about of industrial recovery through state aid and regulation. On the other hand, the effect of the crisis upon the economic well-being of the people as a whole, the lowered standard of living and the staggering increase in unemployment, have led to an unprecedented use of state assistance and to the inauguration of schemes of public works construction to alleviate distress and to increase social security.

As the crisis deepens it becomes more and more apparent that the state stands torn between the demands of private industry, the very existence of which depends upon the making of a margin of profits, and the claims of the great mass of the people who expect from the state the guarantee of at least a minimum of social security. This is a real dilemma. For the point is reached where the demands of private industry can be met only at the expense of the claims of the people to social security, and the claims of the people can be adequately met only if private industry abdicates its right to a

margin of profits; i.e., only if private industry accepts the inevitability of its own doom. This is the supreme test of the democratic system.

At this point it is necessary to consider some effects of economic crisis upon social psychology. It is a common fallacy that increased pressure of economic distress induces greater realism in economic and political thinking; that as people become more hungry they become more radical; that economic crisis breeds socialists. The fallacy arises out of the assumption that hunger itself induces thought. It may simply induce pain or weakness. The increase of economic insecurity or of actual distress may cause people to search for the source of insecurity and distress and so convert them to radicalism, but it is just as likely to induce a state of panic or hysteria, a psychological instability in which they will search desperately for an immediate panacea for the more obvious ills, or for a leader who will direct them into the promised land. This latter phenomenon is common in highly developed industrial countries and is to be found especially among two social groups. In the first place, among the lowest economic group there is probably a majority who have been lacking in security for so long that they have developed an attitude of utter dependence upon society or the state. Increased distress will only make them more susceptible to the bribes or promises of *soi disant* saviours. But in the second place, throughout the entire range of the middle class where individualism has been exalted to a religious creed, there are multitudes who are incapable of scrapping or even modifying the creed of a lifetime and who will respond to the call of any one that will hold out the promise of a return of individual security.

Two other factors contribute to the psychological instability of the people during a time of crisis. Among great sections of the working class, as well as among a section of

the middle class and so-called intellectuals, economic crisis and social distress do induce a realistic analysis of the economic situation. The strength as well as the political realism of the socialist movement is increased. To a middle class already feeling insecure this growth of radicalism appears as a real threat to their remaining security. They are easily aroused by "red scares," and are likely to lend support to the most unscrupulous politician, newspaper editor or financier who sets out to "strafe" the communists or socialists. The other factor which plays its part in a time of economic distress is racial. Economic crisis invariably heightens race tension. This may be due to the fact that a minority group has developed certain survival traits which stand it in good stead in time of stress. In Germany the nazis claimed that the Jews had the jobs while the good Germans starved. On the other hand, the growth in race tension may come from the increased exploitation of the economically inferior race and a resultant militancy in the attitude of the oppressed. The change in the race relationships between Negroes and whites in the United States during the depression may be accounted for in this way.

It is this psychological instability, amounting at times to hysteria, which blurs the issue in the struggle between democracy and fascism. For if the mass of the people were aware of the nature of economic crisis and clearly perceived the basic cause of their distress, even the monopolistic possession of economic power would not save the economic rulers from destruction. The will of the people would be asserted through legislative action which would provide for the reorganization of the economy to meet economic need. But the presence of psychological insecurity and the lack of understanding of social and economic phenomena afford the opportunity for the final consolidation of economic and political power and the suppression of democracy. Such was

the case in Germany. Whatever part the great barons of the Ruhr and the Rhine played in the early days of the National Socialist movement, there is no doubt that as they saw approaching the crisis of their regime they threw their millions behind Hitler and saved their system. Always a dangerous policy — for a dictator is not fond of acknowledging his debts to his financial benefactors — fascism is entered upon only as a last recourse. Usually the dominant economic group will prefer to manipulate democracy, leaving intact the camouflage of civil freedom. But it is essential to note that the final test for modern democracy does not appear as a clear issue, and the demoralization of public thinking tends to become so chronic that faith in democracy has vanished before the death blow to democracy is struck.

Little more need be said here concerning the nature of the fascist state as it will present itself to a distraught people. Over against the threat of chaos, or the "menace" of bolshevism, will be set the benefits of order and discipline. Over against national shame will be set the glories of national greatness, the full realization of national destiny. The will of the people which proved during crisis so ineffectual will be replaced by the will of the leader. The private claims of groups or classes in the nation will be forgotten in the newly achieved national unity.

It need hardly be added that the newly organized state, for all its blatant claims, will solve none of the economic problems which occasioned its rise. It will only make impossible protest and demand for effective social change. Suffering will continue — indeed, as we have seen in the case of Italy and Germany, it will become more acute. For a long time it will be silent suffering. But eventually that silence will be broken and the dictator will have to choose between war — the logical conclusion of a blatant nationalism — and revolution — the logical issue of class conflict, the normal

resolution of prolonged injustice and repression. And ultimately there are not two choices but one. For war will simply postpone the nemesis which must overtake the fascist state and its dictator.

II. The Socialist Alternative to Fascism

We have observed that modern democracies are faced with the alternatives of committing suicide by the establishment of a fascist politico-economic dictatorship or of destroying the economic power of private financial and industrial interests and establishing a socialized and co-operative economy directed towards the adequate provision of economic security. The economic structure of the socialized state is dealt with elsewhere in this book (cf. Chaps. VI, X). The political structure is more difficult adequately to describe. The single example of a state approximating to socialism stands, unfortunately, outside of the democratic tradition. The outstanding characteristics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are probably more Russian than they are socialist. The long period of tsarist dictatorship, with the accompanying backwardness, illiteracy and political irresponsibility of the masses, made a period of communist dictatorship inevitable. As counter-revolutionary danger diminishes, as education advances, as industrial efficiency increases, it seems apparent that a larger and larger measure of democratic freedom will emerge. The new Russian Constitution is the first step in this direction. But at the present moment the imminence of war makes for the continuance of centralized control. Even here, however, one must not confuse the dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. with the dictatorship in Germany or in Italy. In the first place, the "dictatorship" in the U.S.S.R., although apparently vested in one man, is actually a dictatorship of a Party of more than two million

members to which Stalin as Secretary of the Central Executive of the Communist Party is responsible. In the second place, the Party is controlled and disciplined by allegiance to a philosophy and a practice of social reorganization which expresses itself in the planning of the entire economy. There is no place in the Soviet Union for the arbitrary whims of a dictator. If Stalin were to die to-morrow the Soviet regime would carry on undisturbed.

On the other hand, Sweden provides an example of the emergence of a state which is, at least in part, organized for economic security. Here we discover the minimum of centralist coercion and the maximum of broad-based democratic control. There are of necessity elements of politico-economic centralism, e.g., in the control of credit and banking, but these represent largely the transference to the representatives of the people of monopolistic functions previously exercised by irresponsible private corporations. The interrelationship between economic centralism and social planning makes possible the enlargement of the range of economic and political freedom so curtailed by the critical decline of the capitalist system. And over against features of politico-economic centralism there are to be found in Sweden the extremes of decentralized control in the great co-operative movement, the dominant institution in the field of distribution. Sweden suggests many lessons concerning the organization and character of the socialized state; parliamentary democracy can adapt itself to the new functions of government made necessary by the adoption of social planning; the economic structure as well as the forms of political administration will have great variety, e.g., state banking system, socialized transport, co-operative distributive services which operate even a co-operative electric light bulb factory. Moreover, it is possible that local governments will be found most useful in the matter of the organization of planned

economy. For example, in a planned economy in Canada, operating in relation to a central planning commission, there could be a federal socialized railway system, provincial hydro systems and municipal distributive services for bread and milk. The banking and trade policy of the new labour government of New Zealand is providing an example of the adaptation of democratic institutions to the needs of social planning and also an example of the sponsoring of a variety of socialized and co-operative institutions in a single economy. Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand and, to a lesser degree, England, show what a close relationship there is between the efficacy of democracy to achieve important changes in the direction of a socialized economy and the social intelligence and economic education of the people. In both Sweden and Denmark the co-operative and socialist movements have been based upon a long process of adult education.

The history of the Scandinavian countries and the results of certain socialist and co-operative measures in New Zealand and in England must not blind us to the difficulties which parliamentary democracy must face in seeking to establish socialism. There is no such thing as the "inevitability of gradualism." The grim fate of the socialists of Vienna in February, 1934, shows what always threatens to occur to liberal constitutionalists who credit the enemy with their own high-mindedness. The present holders of economic power are likely to see with far greater clarity than their socialist opponents the finality of the struggle in which society is engaged. It is therefore they who will be most likely to adopt methods of ruthlessness when they perceive that their power is being gradually cut away from them.[4] The education,

[4] At the time this chapter goes to press events in Spain provide another grim illustration of the unrelenting violence which forces of reaction will direct against a constitutionally established government that is determined to effect socialist transformation.

then, upon which the survival of democracy depends must contain those elements of political realism which will save the young and untried socialist state from extinction at the hands of the remaining forces of capitalism or reaction. Moreover, it must be recognized that the degree to which a peaceful transition can be effected will vary inversely with the degree to which economic and hence social disintegration has advanced. Thus the comparative economic stability of Sweden after the war combined with the high level of social understanding to prevent in that country the rise of fascist trends. The element of time is most important and the occasion tends to pass when the first effective steps to a reorganized society may be taken in a constitutional manner. It is the apathy of the citizens of Western nations to the necessity of drastic change which makes the communists' analysis seem so convincing. But to adopt the attitude of the inevitability of violent revolution is defeatist as long as democracy provides any faint hope of being utilized to effect the change.

III. Church and Social Action

Since this book sets out to face the social and economic crisis from the standpoint of Christianity, it is necessary at this stage to consider the relationship of the church to the present political changes and those likely to take place in the immediate future.

The plight of the Protestant church in Germany is instructive since, unlike the Greek Orthodox church in pre-revolutionary Russia, it had adjusted itself to the thought and conditions of the modern world and was the strongest representative of one of the two main branches of the Reformation. An analysis of the relationship between church and state long before the rise of Hitler's movement will clarify to a great

extent the subsequent history of the forces of organized religion in Germany. True to their Lutheran traditions the Evangelical churches in Germany maintained a rigidly "other-worldly" emphasis, to the exclusion of a concern for those mundane social and economic matters which play so large a part in the everyday life of the common people. This is brought out clearly in the careful study by Paul Means, *Things That Are Caesar's.*

One direct outcome of this particular attitude on the part of the churches was that the whole field of social reform and critical radical movements was left to the state or to radical secular organizations. The latter, with considerable justification, regarded the church as an institution which had not the least concern in matters of social reform, regarded it even as hostile to movements directed to the social amelioration of the lot of the people. Consequently, within these radical organizations there developed an organized antagonism to religious bodies and a well-defined antipathy to religion itself. The socialist movements on the continent, in marked contrast with the socialist movement in England, have had a definite antireligious bias, and an aggressive atheism has formed a part of their political creed. For this the Evangelical churches in Germany must assume their share of responsibility.[5]

The alienation of the masses from the churches in Germany and the other-worldly emphasis of the German religious

[5] In the *Information Service Bulletin* of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America for March 14, 1936, Henry S. Leiper writes: "It would be quite erroneous to suppose that the struggle in the German church is a wholly new development. Many of the factors in it have been present for generations. Chief among them on the evangelical side was an extreme 'other-worldliness' which had allowed the church to be identified with the state, while the church shut its eyes to many violent contradictions of its position. This had led long before Hitler to a great weakening of the church's hold upon the German people, who, while nominally maintaining connection with it, were in fact increasingly alienated."

tradition has had two very serious consequences. One aspect of the other-worldly — this-worldly dichotomy was a blind devotion to the state in all its activities. This meant that the church was slow to perceive the true character of the nazi state and made no effort to oppose it until the church's very life was menaced. In the time of its greatest need the church found little sympathy from the masses. The other even more serious consequence of the German church's general social attitude was that it made no contribution whatsoever to those forces and movements which, had they been stronger and more firmly grounded upon ethical conviction as well as upon political realism, might have prevented the rise of Hitler and carried through the social revolution to successful conclusion.

It is more difficult to set forth the relationship between church and state in the countries outside of Germany where democracy faces crisis. In England and America the dominant Protestant trend has been Calvinist rather than Lutheran. The other-worldly emphasis of the Lutheran tradition has therefore been lacking and religion has to some extent been carried into the forum and the market place.

The great founders of Calvinism in its various branches — Calvin himself, John Knox and Jonathan Edwards — had no idea that man's relationships in political or economic society could be outside of the control of religion. Geneva, Scotland, New England, were the terrains selected for carrying on the glorious campaign for the Kingdom of God. The life of city or nation was to be subordinated to the control of the church. The failure of such ecclesiastico-political control demonstrated the unsuspected strength of the new forces of arrogant individualism in the economic realm and also in the evolving philosophy of modern political democracy. The role of the Covenanters in Scotland and that played by the Puritans in the establishment of the Commonwealth showed

how natural it was for Calvinism to express itself in the political field. Later the attitude of the Society of Friends towards war revealed in a negative way the concept of a definite relationship between a man's religious life and his political obligations.

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the autonomy of the economic and the political spheres had been achieved and the philosophy of individualism had come to be accepted alike in the field of economics, politics and morals. The consequence of this philosophy in the fields of economic and political action we have observed above. In the field of religion individualism meant two things. It meant, first, the right of the individual to carry on his religion as he saw fit without interference from the state or from religious bodies other than his own. But in the second place, individualism was applied to the system of ethics taught by the Protestant churches. Religion tended to develop the man of upright character, whose thoughts, habits and desires were disciplined, who placed a check upon his appetites, who was scrupulously honest in his dealings and thrifty and diligent in his occupation, who regarded his business as a "calling" and who accepted the responsibility of stewardship for those worldly possessions with which God had seen fit to bless him. Note that in this catalogue the peculiarly Christian virtues of charity, mercy, brotherly love and compassion are conspicuously lacking. Nor was there any suggestion that the merit of one's actions should be checked by reference to their social consequence.

Now these virtues of Protestantism were closely related to the qualities essential to success in the new world of commercial and industrial enterprise. Rigid adherence to a code which enjoined temperance and chastity developed a self-discipline that was of considerable advantage in a highly competitive business world. A sense of solemn moral obli-

gation frequently expressed itself in the integrity of the Protestant statesman, although in these latter days of Protestantism's decline economic zeal has sometimes outstripped the urge to maintain a high standard of ethical integrity. On the whole it may be said that Protestantism made its important contribution to the development of the laissez faire statesman and the aggressive entrepreneur who were the effective advocates and protagonists of the advancing industrial civilization.

Not only did Protestantism accept the autonomy of the economic order, infused of course with its own favourite individualistic virtues, but it also affirmed with confidence the belief in "progress" based upon the rapid advance of modern technical science and upon the rugged initiative of the disciplined individual. It seldom occurred to the church to interfere either in the economic or the political realm. It was sufficient that individual "Christians" discharge their responsibilities as stewards of wealth, position or power. Be it noticed that equalitarianism never seriously disturbed the modern church as it did many of the philosophers of the modern political democratic tradition. Wesley regarded the movements of his time towards political democracy as thoroughly pernicious and the churches as a whole opposed Chartism as a movement of unregenerate workingmen who would not recognize their proper "station."

One significant exception to the church's policy of political non-intervention was in the matter of the "social vices." (We might have mentioned slavery, but on this issue, notably in the United States, the forces of the church were divided.) The social counterpart of individual breaches of the moral code raised its head in the "liquor question" and the "vice issue." Clearly it was difficult if not impossible to control these forms of social immorality by reiterated injunction to personal temperance and sexual purity. Legislative action

was necessary to control or to stamp out the "trade" or the "traffic," and the church forces of the community from time to time would gird their loins and boldly issue into the fray of political conflict. Nor was their influence in these fields entirely negligible. But it seldom occurred to the forces of organized religion that they were straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. It would have surprised and shocked worthy churchmen to be told that forms of exploitation in the normal conduct of the nation's business had even more serious consequences upon the good life of the individual than the liquor trade or the vice traffic, and that the comparative futility of the efforts to control the more obvious forms of social sin was due to their interrelationship with the wider system of human exploitation.

In one field of political expression we might have expected a definite stand by the church — the field of war. Unfortunately, with the distinguished exception of the Society of Friends, no positive attitude against war was sponsored by the churches prior to the Great War. So far from proclaiming the gospel ethic against war, the churches as a whole openly aided the state in promulgating those high ethical ideals without which modern war cannot be made popular. It is a matter of ironic interest that the reactionary opponents to the church's participation in the field of social reform ("religion into politics and economics") are the same individuals who applauded so lustily the churches' activity in furthering the war aims of modern nations.

It is necessary at this point to call attention to a group within organized Christianity whose influence is becoming increasingly effective. The dialectical process of modern society has its repercussions in the field of religious as well as of social thinking. Throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century there was a minority within the church who were conscious of the conflict between the basic ethic of

Christianity and its practice in the economic and political order. They could trace their tradition of rebellion back to the poor priests in Wyclif's day and the Diggers and Levellers at the time of Cromwell. They appeared in the Chartist movement and in the ranks of the Luddites. Later the Christian Socialist tradition took more definite form in the labours and teachings of Maurice, Ludlow and Kingsley, whose first active proclamation of social Christianity was occasioned by the pathetic collapse of the Chartist movement. It is significant that their Christian Socialist Manifesto appeared in the same year as the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels. This tradition has never been allowed to die, although it has never become popular among orthodox churchmen. It inspired the workers' education movement. It contributed to the program of social amelioration of the settlement movement. Through the work of Dr. Westcott, Scott Holland and Bishop Gore it is manifest in the educational program of the Christian Social Union. Its adherents, while maintaining their major interest within the church, have been active in the Independent Labour Party, the trade union movement and the Labour Party. The continued breakdown of our economy and the growing distress of the masses have caused Christian Socialist thinkers to become more and more realistic. The recent contribution of a group of English Christian Socialists, *Christianity and the Social Revolution,* is as valuable to radical literature as it is to Christian social thought.[6]

In America the inauguration of the social gospel movement by Walter Rauschenbusch introduced a leaven of social radi-

[6] The activity of Christian Socialists in England may be gauged by the number and variety of societies which have developed within the churches since the pioneer efforts of Dr. Westcott, Scott Holland and Bishop Gore. Mentioning but a few, we may list: the Industrial Christian Fellowship; the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship (C. O. P. E. C.); the Catholic Crusade; the Socialist Christian League; and the League of the Kingdom of God.

calism into the thinking of the churches. Its early expression was coloured no doubt by the liberal optimism of an apparently successful industrial civilization. In more recent years it has developed an ethical and political realism which is represented in such leaders as Harry F. Ward, Reinhold Niebuhr, Kirby Page, Sherwood Eddy and a host of others.

In contrast with the radical movement on the continent the radical movement in England and, to a lesser degree, in America, has been free from a bitter antireligious complex. The reason is that from the churches, inspired to some extent by the radicalism of Christianity, men have gone out and entered wholeheartedly into the labour movement. In England we may cite the examples of Keir Hardy, John Burns, George Lansbury, George Brown, Sir Stafford Cripps and many other rank and file members of the Labour Party. In the American radical movement Norman Thomas, Scott Nearing and Harry Laidler may be mentioned. In Canada both the Socialist leader, J. S. Woodsworth, and the Communist leader, A. E. Smith, had their beginnings in the Methodist ministry. Some of these individuals found the institutional complacency of the church repellent and severed their connection with organized religion to give a freer expression to a genuinely Christian ethic in the cause of the working classes. Others, while making their chief contribution in the labour movement, maintain an active association with their churches.

IV. The Contribution of the Church

It is quite apparent that the changes in the form and function of the state which have arisen out of economic crisis have created a situation of grave moment to the organized forces of Christianity. The emergence of the totalitarian principle jeopardizes their very existence as well as reducing the life

and freedom of the individual to such insignificance as to nullify any opportunity for spiritual development. On the other hand, the rapidity of economic change and the necessity for democracy to develop a new intelligence and a new social conscience provide an opportunity for organized religion to play an important role in averting fascism and assisting in the process of social transformation.

Economic crisis is tending to increase the influence of the socially conscious group within the church. That the churches are becoming aware of their responsibility and opportunity is to be seen in the growing concern in economic issues expressed in the findings of church groups and conferences. Apart, however, from the activities of minority groups within the church, this concern usually stops short with intelligently, or unintelligently, drafted resolutions. The question must pertinently be asked, therefore: What steps must the church take in order more effectively to exert its peculiar influence in the modern democratic movement of social reconstruction?

We shall suggest three ways in which the church can relate itself to the political task of our generation.

(1) *The church must concern itself specifically with the economic distress which deepens as the crisis continues.* There are two reasons for this step. In the first place, continued misery is the soil out of which fascism springs, and before fascism those sporadic outbreaks of insurrection which stimulate police violence and repression. In the second place, economic misery is a proof not only of the stupidity of man as an economist but of the sin of man in the modern economic order who, driven insatiably by the desire for profit, neglects the need of his brother. The church therefore has reasons both of expediency and of ethical obligation for facing realistically the problem of present social distress. It has a threefold obligation:

(a) Clearly to establish the unethical basis of an order which permits distress to continue. This is peculiarly a task of religion.

(b) To study various aspects of the immediate distress so as to devise or initiate means of mitigating suffering or dealing with conditions of human need in the most scientific way possible. Proper fields of investigation and participation by Christian groups are: conditions of the unemployed, co-operative ventures, housing, social and health insurance, etc.

(c) To study the more fundamental problem of eliminating the causes of economic distress, maldistribution of wealth, etc., so as to understand the necessary political and economic measures which must be taken as a preliminary to the establishment of a just social and economic system. Here it may be mentioned that measures which from one point of view may be regarded as immediate steps to lessen distress, e.g., co-operative ventures, may become part of the means of permanently eliminating the sources of misery and exploitation.

(2) *The church must concern itself with the increasing menace of international war.* The causes of war are manifold. (A list of them, based upon a most clear-sighted analysis of the present situation in Europe, will be found in John Gunther's *Inside Europe,* pp. 399, 400.)[7] They include: the growth of nationalism, the increase of armaments and the propaganda and intrigue of armaments manufacturers; the economic competition of great powers, vastly intensified by the economic crisis; the rise of the fascist powers faced by the dilemma of internal revolution or external aggression, with all important matters of foreign policy resting upon the arbitrary decision of a dictator. During recent years the increase of international tension has been characterized by a return to the system of competing alliances which marked the

[7] The recently published book by R. Palme Dutt — *World Politics 1918–1936* — is one of the best analyses of the economic causes of war.

years immediately preceding the war. Sometimes these alliances have been within the League of Nations, sometimes outside of the League, sometimes they seem to point to a combination of League powers against the powers which have withdrawn from the League. So complicated and tangled has the European situation become that, in spite of a genuine will to peace on the part of the peoples of the world, public opinion, even when organized and directed so as to coerce governments, appears to have little effect in halting the drift toward war. Be it noted also that "public opinion" has disappeared in the very countries which require the greatest amount of restraint in preventing their governments from leaping into military excursions.

What effective contribution can the church make to prevent war and ensure the consolidation of peace upon a lasting basis? In the first place, it goes without saying that churches must take the negative stand of separating themselves from the war aims of the governments in their respective countries. It is difficult to discover any justification in the Gospels for the church of Christ's constituting an auxiliary arm of the service in a campaign of mass destruction. Such a negative stand, however, while it may do something to save the soul of the church, will do little to prevent war. A frank stand of pacifism on the part of the leaders of the church and as many as possible of the rank and file membership appears to be in keeping with the gospel ethic. It may have some deterrent effect upon governments who accept too readily the necessity of resort to armed intervention.

But the absolute pacifist stand suffers from the defects of all absolutist positions in a world governed by the operation of dialectical forces. History since the war has pointed to the necessity of the organization of a system of peace to prevent the international order from drifting into the organization of a system of war. Offensive and defensive alliances

are the natural alternative to the collective system of world peace. Any system of international relationships depends for its effectiveness upon the assumption of responsibility on the part of the member states. This responsibility consists not only in the obligation not to participate in any act of armed aggression in the settlement of a dispute, but also in the obligation to join with other states in bringing compulsion upon the state that by its act of aggression endangers the peace of the world. This compulsion may consist of moral condemnation, of economic sanctions, and possibly in the last resort, of military sanctions.

The maintenance of collective security by military sanctions in the present world may appear a frank abandonment of the effort to preserve peace, a confession of defeat. For more and more it becomes apparent that the League of Nations may be used as a convenient moral screen for the imperialistic policies of the foreign offices of the great powers. It may be simply the means of effectively organizing the "haves" against the "have-nots" and rallying to the side of the "haves" those lesser states which are not immediately concerned in the issue which occasions the conflict. There is a grave danger, that is, that the League be converted by the great powers into a useful basis upon which to establish a new balance of power. Furthermore the definite menace to world peace of the fascist powers makes it almost inevitable that a war will develop to save the world from fascism or naziism, just as the last war was fought to save the world from kaiserism. Actually, saving the world from kaiserism came to mean saving it for fascism.

It is quite apparent then that the greatest amount of realism is necessary for the church if it is to make an effective contribution to the cause of peace. If it had taken a more active interest in the collective system during the crucial decade after the war, that system might have been more ef-

fective to-day. (Witness the effect of League opinion in England in the Hoare-Laval incident.) Now while clearly there is value in all efforts to restore the collective system to its original basis — and the church should carry on an active educational campaign to assist all efforts towards this end — the church must guard itself lest it once more find that it is trapped into becoming an agent of imperialist aspirations veiled behind the fulsome moralizings of diplomats. It is just possible that the highest form of Christian responsibility will not be discharged by jumping on the band-wagon when the cry of " military sanctions " is raised.

Finally, it must be fully understood that war as it menaces the world to-day is but the most hectic and lurid symptom of the advanced stages in the disease of our economic world order. It is the failure of our economic system which drives nations to seek security in economic nationalism, stampedes nations into the psychosis of fascism, urges foreign aggression against backward peoples to gain new sources of raw material or to gain or protect markets. The will to peace must assert itself not only in an active good will towards the people of other nations, not only in establishing the collective system upon a sounder and more equitable basis, but towards the elimination of a system the very nature of which induces war.

(3) It follows from the above discussion that the third contribution which the church is required to make is *giving assistance to those forces which are making for a new democratic society, national and international, organized specifically to promote the highest economic and cultural well-being of the mass of the people.* Since the church is not a political body, nor is it entirely advisable that it should become one even if it could overcome denominational disunity, the main contribution which it can make is educational. The church should consider that one of its prime obligations is the edu-

cation of its members in the responsibilities of Christian citizenship. Previously such education has been regarded as having reference to the state as at present constituted. Clearly this is not enough, although one may say that within the present state there are good citizens and bad citizens. The highest obligation of Christian citizenship is to that state which has not yet evolved, but which may evolve, granted the intelligence and the devotion of those who are willing to identify themselves with the cause of the new society. Education in Christian citizenship must be education in the nature of the modern world; education in the causes making for economic, social and political decline; education in the necessary economic and political steps to be taken if our civilization is to be saved, if the fuller life for the individual is to be made possible. Education in "principles" or "ideals" is not enough, for history has shown that such education does not carry over into practice. Principles and ideals must be translated into concrete action in the immediate situation if the individual is to perceive the obligation of Christian citizenship.

Such education, if effective, will greatly increase and strengthen the political radical movement which carries the struggle into the field where legislation can be effected to transform the organization of the state. One of the tragic results of the church's apathy during the last century towards the plight of the common people has been that the motivation of the radical movement is not always that which governs Christians; it frequently seems to contradict the ethic of Christianity. It is therefore not always easy for a Christian to take his part in the radical movement without feeling that he is compromising himself. For the radical movement has gained many of its recruits from those who have experienced the deepest distress. Consequently they are apt to view with bitterness and a desire for vengeance those who perpetuate

the present system. Moreover, they perceive with a greater realism than most Christians the violence which is involved in the maintenance of that order, and feel that the final conquest of power will be resisted with even greater violence on the part of the powers that be. The successful capture of power will therefore be accomplished by the masters of an effective revolutionary technique. Many Christians therefore [8] feel that the presence of violence and the existence of un-Christian motivation in the radical movement inhibit the church or Christians *qua* Christians from taking part in the political struggle. The answer would seem to be that we must act according to our best lights and our highest motivations in the situation wherein we actually find ourselves. It is no solution for the church or for Christians to withdraw from the world. Such a course simply leaves the field to the enemy and makes it inevitable that Christianity will exert no influence upon the final outcome. Moreover the extent to which violence dominates or to which un-Christian motives prevail will be in inverse ratio to the extent of the participation of Christian individuals and groups in the struggle. We have already seen how in those countries where social intelligence is high democracy is upon a sounder basis and the menace of fascism is less severe.

Moreover there is a demand for a minority group of Christian radicals to lead the way in the political field. A minority group of Christian Socialists in active participation in the secular radical movement would be in a position to urge the movement beyond tempting compromises towards more ultimate objectives. It could maintain a channel of understanding between secular forces and intra-church groups who are beginning to become aware of their obligations as Christians. It could play an important role in mitigating violence, the danger of which grows more acute as economic distress con-

[8] Cf. Richard Niebuhr in *The Church Against the World.*

tinues. Finally, in the presence of those inevitable disasters and setbacks which a radical group must expect to experience, an active Christian minority could demonstrate that faith in the ultimate victory of righteousness which in their own tradition finds triumphant expression in the cross.

VIII

THE CHURCH'S ROLE

I. THE WORD OF PROPHECY

J. W. A. NICHOLSON

THE church is a voluntary association of men and women with the special object of keeping alert and active their sense of kinship with their fellows in God, of cultivating the spirit of comradeship within this divine-human community, and of intensifying the consciousness of partnership with God in the larger social enterprise which progressively embodies his ultimate purpose. The members of the church belong to many other associations — club, trade union, political party, business organization — in all of which, as Christian citizens, they profess to serve God in serving their fellows. Thus they contribute to the collective welfare and receive stimulus and nourishment for personal development. But these other organizations are partial in their aim and fragmentary in their scope, and their members are in constant peril of forgetting the essential wholeness of life. Material things and individual persons tend to appear in isolation from the oneness of the divine community, and to be too easily regarded simply as instruments of men's private

ends. Thus material things are profaned and human beings prostituted for unworthy uses. When man acts in this fashion, he perverts his own powers and brings discord into a society whose purpose is human welfare. Thus, for the time, he frustrates the will of God.

The church's special function, then, is to keep men conscious of God and the community, for they belong to both. These are not independent and unrelated, but two aspects of something that is an organic whole. Intimacy with God involves mutuality among men, and that not alone within a select, congenial group, but among all men. God is not known in cloistered isolation, nor found while one pursues some exclusive advantage. He is known through conscious membership in the larger family of which he is the head.

In fulfilling her role as the focus of conscious fellowship with God and man, the church must nourish the prophetic spirit and speak with prophetic voice the judgments of the God of all the earth. She will confront men with the insistent demands of the spirit, and examine her own life and the life of the society to which she belongs in the light of these demands. She will preserve a counter-pressure to certain recurrent tendencies of established society. Specifically, her prophetic task will be:

(1) *Progressive versus Traditional.* The prophet, with his vivid awareness of God's activity in human affairs and his judgment of men and nations, is ever impatient with past achievement. The contrast of existing conditions with the divine imperative is so glaring that he must persistently challenge his fellows to go forward with the onward-moving Spirit of Love at the heart of things. He is the protagonist of progress. He may be a radical in religion, a rebel in politics, a revolutionary in the social sphere. But in his passionate appeal to men he speaks, not as an individual, but as the voice of history. From all mundane authorities and

institutions he appeals to the primal source of all law and of all order. His formula is: "Thus saith the Lord!" The traditions of the elders, however hoary with age and hallowed with sanctity, must yield before the imperative of his commission: "The Lord hath spoken. Who can but prophesy?"

The church must beware of the common tendency to accept the achieved result as final, to quote Moses when Amos has appeared, to cite Isaiah when Jesus has come. She must be forward-looking, onward-moving, traveling to some far-off divine event, in fellowship with the Determiner of Destiny. She will, indeed, treat the past with discriminating respect. But she will remember that the goodness of the past leaves undiminished to the living present the command: "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" She will nourish the vision of the greater things God will yet do through her, or in spite of her, in the brave days to come.

(2) *Ethical versus Ecclesiastical and Emotional.* The prophetic church will stress the primacy of the ethical in religion. There has been in all ages within established religion the dangerous tendency towards a predominant emphasis on doctrine, or on ecclesiastical machinery, ritual and otherwise, or on the cultivation of emotional experiences. It was the supreme service of the Hebrew prophets to establish once and for all that a divine power worthy of the reverence and devotion of mankind will be concerned chiefly for moral character, expressed in social arrangements for the common good. But all the historic churches appear to have gravitated back to the pagan notion that the important thing is to keep the machinery going. Worship and wickedness have flourished together, or the wickedness has been but mildly rebuked. In some churches the beauty of ritual, and in others the bustle of organization, seems the reason for their existence, rather than righteousness. For Jesus the weightier matters of the Law were justice, mercy, integrity. Nor did

he encourage sentimental enthusiasm; to the gushing woman who cried, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee," he answered: "Nay, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." He placed little faith in pious sentiments or religious thrills divorced from creative social action. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

(3) *Spiritual versus Secular.* The prophetic church must bring a sense of the living God into every area of human life. Nothing human is alien to God. There can be no secular places and no profane activities that in themselves are good and right. Monday will be as sacred as Sunday, the factory and barn as holy as the church. Our natural resources, the machinery of production, manufacture and distribution, the producers, the consumers, the commodities, will take on spiritual significance from the will of the Owner of all wealth and the Overseer of all enterprise. From the lowest animal need to the loftiest aspiration of the soul, whatever contributes to the enrichment of the individual without impoverishing another, belongs to the social plan and must conform to the divine purpose.

(4) *Collective versus Individualist.* For three centuries the Protestant churches have been stressing the individual, and other agencies have tended to do the same. Individualism was the result of a justifiable revolt against the restraints and compulsions of institutions which had become autocratic and oppressive. The philosophy of individualism, however, became an apology for a new autocracy which flourished under the pleasant name of laissez faire. But, *laissez faire* whom? Naturally, those in possession of the means of production. It was "liberty" to exploit those means to their own advantage, to increase their profit and spread their power. By now the larger part of economic activity has come into the control of a very small group, whose prominence and

wealth give them also a large measure of control of cultural and religious institutions. An economic oligarchy rules the economic world and casts its tentacles over every sphere of life. The freedom of the few means the enslavement of the many; this is what the philosophy of individualism has brought about.

The supreme duty of the prophetic church at the present time is to focus the attention of her members upon this economic situation, with its implications for religion. In the past she has been content to offer guidance for the face-to-face dealings of man with man. This was her duty, for such dealings once constituted a much larger part of economic activity. But in the modern industrial era, with its concentration of economic power and its huge industrial and financial corporations, economic activity is mainly collective, impersonal and infinitely complex. The old individual virtues of honesty, industry and thrift will guarantee no man a livelihood. The situation has changed utterly, and the church must rouse men to the fact and inculcate a Christian social morality adequate to the new conditions.

Why is religion concerned with morality in the economic realm? Because it is there that the average man invests his energies and talents, his mind and/or his muscle, not occasionally but for a lifetime. It colours all his thinking, feeling, choosing, and powerfully affects the very texture of his being. For the vast majority of men, no other interest has the same influence in the moulding of character. The ideals, incentives and attitudes that prevail here will soon prevail everywhere.

Again, the church must face the economic issue because here the central principles of Christianity are most glaringly violated. The class divisions of society make brotherhood impossible and flout the doctrine of the fatherhood of God. The profit motive calls into play the speculative, combative,

domineering impulses, with tragic results for society at large. The cohesive elements in our divine-human nature are inhibited, frustrated, suppressed. The divisive and disruptive forces are released and strengthened. Acquisitive and aggressive individuals, groups and nations, prey upon the others. Against his will the good man finds himself involved in exploitation and conflict.

Against such a system in society the prophetic voice will protest vehemently. It will summon Christians to the rebuilding of society — to the replacing of selfishness by mutual service, competition by co-operation, domination by brotherhood, chaos and gambling by ordered planning for the common good. This is a world problem, and foreign missions, peace propaganda, and economic and social reconstruction are parts of a single task.

Lastly, the church must understand and share, so far as it can, the struggle of the oppressed masses for economic democracy. With potential plenty in "our Father's house," the majority of his children are in want. To them the "Good News" must be brought that at last the royal palace they have built and furnished is to be open to them too. No longer must their bodies be stunted, their minds starved, their aspirations baffled. *All* God's children must receive the Father's bounty. It is their birthright.

II. THE EVANGEL OF THE KINGDOM

R. EDIS FAIRBAIRN

REALIST thinkers are frankly pessimistic in regard to prospects for social reconstruction. The forces in control of the state being what they are, it is not considered possible

that radical change can be other than in the direction of some form of capitalist dictatorship — at any rate in the first place, and temporarily. As an additional handicap, the socialization of civilization would call for a large-scale enthusiasm and devotion to ideals hardly conceivable in this actual world of men, above and beyond an understanding of principles which the average man does not have and is loath to make the effort to secure.

Religion has in the past been the source of much altruistic dynamic. But religion is supposed, with a measure of likelihood, to be in the doldrums. In fact, otherwise well-informed writers consider it if not defunct at least so moribund as to be negligible as a factor for social change.

"Religion," says Professor Laski,[1] "was a unifying force, but the discoveries of science, on the one hand, and its subordination to the interests of privilege, upon the other, have proved fatal to its claims upon the allegiance of men."

Religion seems to be a favoured blind spot with some otherwise careful and competent thinkers. We would suppose that the facts of history would make an assumption of its obsolescence precarious. Religion, at least in the form of Christianity, has shown itself distinctly unpredictable. We can be sure of only one thing in this connection. However dead religion may be, in seeming or in actuality, it can never be relied upon to stay dead. It may at any moment surprisingly and dynamically come alive again.

Emotion as dynamic for social change may be positive or negative, of the nature of hate or love. Most of the historic social overturns have drawn largely upon that of hate. The protagonists of Christianity claim that however temporarily effective hate may be in such a cause it carries with it products socially undesirable. Religion, it would seem at first sight, can make no use of hate as a force for social change.

[1] Harold J. Laski, *The State in Theory and Practice*, p. 309.

Before we too easily accept that, however, we had better check up on our own thinking lest we fall victim to our own sentimentalism.

If we hesitate to use the word "hate" of the emotional colouring of Hebrew prophecy we shall be obliged to find a word very near it in meaning. The prophets themselves did not hesitate to put the word on the lips of God, and that in the very context of protest against social injustice. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. . . . But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." One of the psalms exhorts those that love the Lord to hate evil. Religion has, we suggest, a distinct function as a generator of the negative dynamic of indignation, resentment, and revolt against the immoral and insane elements in our social structure.

Jesus himself felt free to manifest the emotion of anger, not merely against general tendencies of social situations, but against those individuals who incarnated in themselves social evil. At a college function the writer recently sat next to two clergymen and a professor of theology who were discussing what they called the fallacy of supposing that Jesus ever manifested an emotion of real anger. There was no doubt, they affirmed, to one another's visible comfort and satisfaction, that when he used words that appear like scarifying invective he "did it with a smile and not with a snarl." I confess that my own powers of imagination were insufficient to enable me to discern the smile in Jesus' saying, "Ye serpents, ye brood of vipers, how can ye escape being sentenced to Gehenna?" I purposely quote the softened translation of Dr. Moffatt, since with us "the damnation of hell" is a highly coloured phrase. The emotion of moral resentment against the evils of life, culpably maintained or permitted by men, should, and must, we suggest, serve as a co-ordinate element in the crusade for a worthy world order. In so far

as hate is legitimate and required for the process of social change we suggest quite seriously that religion is able to supply the most intense and effective brand.

If religion is to serve effectively as negative dynamic for social change, much will depend upon how far we are justified in using the religious concept of sin in this connection. We are already familiar with the idea of the necessity for social repentance. The force of this idea is, however, minimized for us by confusion in regard to social evil and sin. Professor J. C. Bennett draws a distinction between them. For the latter he postulates the orthodox conditions of deliberation, responsibility, and consciousness of moral standards. Since social evils do not necessarily arise in this way he demurs to the use of the term "sin" in regard to evil social conditions.

"Deliberately chosen evil can only be overcome by an inner change in persons, by real repentance and moral conversion. But evil which is not deliberately chosen cannot be overcome by such means. It can only be overcome by a variety of means which include knowledge of cause and effect and large scale changes in institutions and in external circumstances by social action." [2]

If this is so it would of course be invidious and provocative to brand as sinners those who find themselves the beneficiaries and supporters of an evil system which they did not create. Thereupon we would be estopped from using religion's condemnation of sin as a challenge to men to flee from the economic city of destruction and towards the new and divine social order. We suggest, however, that it is the definition of sin in the individual which is here unsound, however contemporarily orthodox it may be. There is, indeed, a good deal to be said for the doctrine of original sin, socially construed. Who among us could affirm that we became sin-

[2] J. C. Bennett, *Social Salvation*, pp. 8, 9.

ners by deliberately choosing evil in full view of acknowledged moral standards? In obvious fact we all became conscious that we were sinners after the event. In the individual, conviction of sin is the discovery that he has sinned. By the time we become aware of sin as such we have already committed it many times in act, and are tied and biased by the consequences. We realize too that sin is not our personal invention but a response to evil present in our moral and social environment. Repentance becomes the recognition of the fact that a state of mind and way of life, of the wrongness of which we were once unaware, *was* really sinful, and is now *known* to us to be sinful.

With a more realistic conception of the genesis of sin in the individual, we find a striking parallel between it and the sin in society. We did not create it; we find it; and we find ourselves involved in it. Now we see not just that it is evil but that it was evil inherently, and in the moment of that recognition it becomes not merely evil-at-large, but sin-in-us.

The task of the social evangelist in these days becomes then very like that of the old time revivalist who laboured to create conviction of sin in the souls of those not conscious of it. He did that by calling a spade a spade in indicting his hearers of conduct morally sinful but which they had not up to that point *realized* to be sinful. Some would be irritated and resentful, though later they might acknowledge that both their conduct and their resentment had been of the nature of sin.

So we suggest that religion is justified in making its contribution to social reconstruction by bringing its charge of sinfulness against those who participate, however unconsciously, in an exploiting system while making no effort to change it. We do this on what is for Christians the highest authority, that of Jesus, who said of persons totally unconscious either of deliberate wickedness or even dereliction of

duty, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Christianity professes to be the religion of love. Can it make effective use of this alleged dynamic in the enterprise of changing the structure of society? Not, we are sure, if love be conceived as sentimental affectation. Yes, if love be conceived as mutuality, the impulse to community of interest, as protest against all that injures life, and as a militant affirmation of the free and full life increasingly possible for all men. The love commanded by Jesus is, as Professor Gregory Vlastos insists,[3] neither an emotion, an altruism, nor a spiritualized self-interest, but a community of interest effective in protest and concerted endeavour towards social justice.

Here we come upon religion's contribution of positive dynamic for social reconstruction. In the social element of Hebrew law, in the prophetic demand for social righteousness, and especially in the gospel conception of the Kingdom of God, we have a social norm linked with the most compelling religious authority, the will of God.

In another chapter it is shown that, so far from the gospel of Christ being a method of individual salvation having social implications, the converse is true, and the gospel is primarily a vision and promise of social salvation having implications for the individual life.

The realization of this has been dawning with increasing clarity upon the mind of realist students of the Bible for some time. If it cannot be said to be universally accepted as yet, it may at any rate be claimed that where evangelical Christianity is most alive (as distinguished, perhaps, from being most popular) this is the vital principle at work. This Christian gospel is in its nature revolutionary. To get back to its primal essence will require revolutionary energy and action. Originally it won its way by an evangelism that was a spirit-

[3] "What is Love?" *Christendom,* Vol. 1, No. 1.

ual warfare. We will not recover its pristine power except through an evangelism that is also of the nature of spiritual warfare.

Evangelism is admittedly an invidious word. In common religious usage it is tied up with revivalism. It conjures up visions of professional teams of high-pressure salesmen of emotional and frequently freakish religion, whose efforts involve the serious disturbance of church routine, troublesome questions of financing and subsequent spiritual and moral slumps. Some churches seem to live only for such periodic orgies and some live in chronic aversion to them. Nevertheless, whether we use the word or not something of the nature of evangelism is absolutely essential for the application of religion's dynamic in the project of social reconstruction.

Radical changes in thinking, in attitudes and in activities come about only as the result of the collision with a new and living idea, the clash between it and old conventions, with the social renascence induced by this shaking loose. How was the stiff traditionalism of Pharisaic Judaism changed into the flexible, glowing, potent vitality of the Christian movement? By the impact of a gospel, a "god-spel," a vital thought of God expressed in the Kingdom of God idea of Jesus propagated as an evangel, a message of splendour. If the social interest of the large minority of ministers who are socially interested can be implemented in an evangelism of the Kingdom of God, religion may erupt in new, volcanic energy, the pessimistic prognostications of social realists may be disproved, and Christianity may become effective for social transformation *sans* bloody revolution.

The necessity and potency of movements of the nature of evangelism are nowhere more evident than in connection with the rise to power of fascism and naziism. In each case the *essentially* religious nature of these movements is clearly seen in the irrationality that characterizes them, in the abso-

lute quality of the allegiance demanded, and in the devotion freely accorded to the state as a mystical entity. It may be recognized in Germany and Italy by the messianic role ascribed to *der Führer* and the infallibility attributed to Mussolini. It is fairly obvious that nothing but a species of evangelism, that is, a fiery, aggressive propaganda of a religious nature, could have made the revolution in thought and feeling that has been brought about, for instance, among university students, who, in response to the suggestion that they may have parted with something valuable, yell in contemptuous chorus, "We spit on freedom!" That forms of persuasion less courteous than group discussion have been made use of must be admitted. Such methods of nauseous brutality may explain the practical elimination of opposed minorities; that fact does not explain the enthusiasm of the majority. Has Christianity an evangelism to offer comparable in power, if antithetical in method, to the respective evangels of fascism and naziism? Yes, we say, providing it cares to use it and dares to use it. If it has the realism and energy to go back to its origins and study its documents with a new and intelligent attention. If it is willing to recognize the strangeness of Jesus' accent and emphases, in comparison with those of contemporary Christianity. But not if it is so enamoured of its mystical, individualistic, other-worldly spirituality as to feel obliged to superimpose it upon the original simplicity and realism of Jesus.

He called men to follow him, not primarily in personal purity of life and saintly sweetness of disposition, but in loyalty to a Kingdom of God to be implemented in brotherliness towards men. True enough, his expectation was that the Kingdom as a social order in the life of mankind on earth would be brought in by a supernatural act of God; nevertheless, in spiritual fact it was already present since he himself, and in a measure his disciples, were committed to its prin-

ciples. In the event it did not come by a heaven-splitting miracle, but it did come in the presence of the Holy Spirit working in and with men. Unable to function as a world-changing program at that time it did function as a community-creating power. The story of the church through the centuries is a strange blend of shame and heroism. But now in these latter days we have come upon a time when the original vision shines forth with compelling power once again. We find ourselves both privileged and burdened with the power to change our world and the heavy task of enterprising that change. We are called upon to capitalize our faith in the doctrine of God the Holy Spirit by believing that as we grapple with the human impossibilities of a campaign for a Christian social order we shall find God with us, behind us, before us, present in our world and active. The evangel of Jesus, translated into twentieth century terms and situations, is a challenge to men to commit themselves to this crusade. The blessings of personal salvation will come to them automatically and unconsciously as they forget themselves, their own souls, and their eternal future in a contemporary adventure with God.

Such evangelism would be a new thing on the earth. Even as a novelty it would have drawing power, but apart from that it would meet a hunger in the people not at present met by our more sedate worship, as a visit to any tabernacle of freak revivalism will demonstrate. It could learn a great deal, too, from the methods of revivalism, in co-operation, publicity, and the dramatization of conversion and commitment. It is amazing how many of our hymns seem made especially for such a campaign of social evangelism, being utterly banal as expression of the sentimental spirituality of contemporary evangelicalism. "Onward, Christian Soldiers" sung by an ordinary congregation is merely silly, and by soldiers in war time is blasphemous, but as the slogan of a Christian move-

ment to change the world it will be entirely appropriate. We have heard of a committee being appointed to go through the hymnary with a fine-toothed comb looking for terms of belligerency. Let them not be in too much of a hurry! We shall probably need all the militancy of our most militant hymns if this kind of evangelism gets into its stride. For one of the elements necessary if evangelism is to take hold and strike fire in the hearts and minds of the people is controversy. Only through controversy can we get the difference defined with sharpness between outworn and obsolete conceptions and those of a vital and realist gospel. It takes the storm and stress of controversy to break up the crusts of conventionality. Controversy is disagreeable and dangerous, but we must not shirk it. So blow, winds of God!

It is manifestly too much to expect that any of the official churches would officially undertake a campaign of evangelism based squarely upon the social understanding of the Gospels, the effect of which on a large scale would be to initiate a movement looking towards drastic social change. There is however a sufficient fund of social understanding and force of social conscience in many of the churches to make them welcome experiments of social evangelism carried on by groups of like-minded ministers convinced of its feasibility and necessity. A church like the United Church of Canada, which has placed itself on record with such forward-looking documents as its "Reports on Evangelism and Christianizing the Social Order," has really placed itself under moral obligation to implement these statements by radical action in the sphere of both social prophecy and social evangelism. What the world situation calls for is an aggressive campaign sweeping all countries in which Christianity or Judaism is free to act, challenging men who profess allegiance to God or Christ to give account of their faith in terms of action for social transformation. Religion will not make its

possible contribution to the effective reconstruction of the social order unless this is done. If, however, churches hang back, irresolute and afraid, they will have no right to condemn more forthright movements which do not hesitate to use bloody violence to blast a way through the resistance of the privileged. For whether peaceably and by consent, or bloodily and through civil war, it is written that there is to be radical change.

All this is but a suggestion of what religion *might* be and do for social transformation; not, alas, a description of what it is doing, or must do in the future. Religious radicals are plunging into the hazardous business of getting the churches to awake, look and act. At the same time they stand by, tense with suspense, asking themselves: "*Will* they awake? Will they arouse themselves in time?"

III. THE CULTUS OF THE COMMUNITY

R. B. Y. SCOTT

IT may seem at first surprising that special importance for social reconstruction should be ascribed to the religious cultus. Too often the rites and ceremonies of the church have seemed so irrelevant to the more urgent problems of society as to justify, in some measure, the charge that "religion is the opium of the people." The maintenance of a splendid symbolic ceremonial in the midst of flagrant human suffering and evil offers to men an emotional and imaginative escape to an ideal world, dulling sensibility to their own and others' pain and diverting their moral energies from the task of overcoming and transforming the real world of daily experience.

But we must beware of judging cultus only by its defect and the perversion of its function. The cultus of a religious community is simply the established form of its common worship, and worship is indispensable to religion. Indeed, worship *is* religion in its most characteristic and unambiguous expression. If religion be defined as a way of living, determined by conviction about and reverence towards the Ultimate Reality, worship is the reaffirming of that conviction and the deliberate expression of that reverence. It is in worship that the springs of life are fed. Religion is life, and life requires nourishment and periodic refreshment. Religion is commitment, and commitment from time to time demands review in the light of the ends to which it has been made, as a ship must take her bearings to hold her course. Religion is the yearning of the soul for fellowship with God, and must have utterance, though it be no more utterance than a cry. It is a commonplace that faith without works is dead. It is equally certain that faith without articulation in worship will soon die, and its works with it.

As worship is essential to a living religion, so the development of a cultus of some sort is inevitable. It may be simple or elaborate, spontaneous or deliberate, worthy or negligent. But a cultus of some kind there must be, for worship has an outward as well as an inward aspect. Its central reality is "in spirit and in truth"; its outward expression is the bringing of his gift to the altar by one who first has been reconciled to his brother. Reverence, affirmation and vision call for utterance which at once expresses and confirms them. And since men come to their full human stature only in fellowship, their worship is supremely a social matter. With deliberate assembly we pass from worship in a general sense to worship in a particular sense, the source of cultus.

The gathering for worship constitutes an *occasion* in the community life. It takes for granted agreement as to when and where and how the occasion is to be celebrated. The

agreement may be tacit and customary only, or it may be formulated in an accepted liturgy. The *custom* of assembling for common worship and of acting upon certain occasions in a particular way constitutes the cultus of the group. The first element in a cultus, then, is *assembly*. The second is the recurrence of *occasions* which celebrate the significance of the religion for personal and social life generally, or which point its meaning for particular crises. The third fundamental element is *significant and appropriate common action* by the assembly and its representative(s). Something is done by, or in the name of, the worshiping group, for the doing of which the group is assembled upon the particular occasion. In its cultus as a whole the group expresses its common understanding of that which distinguishes it as a religious society and is the reason for its existence.

But what has all this to do with our present problem, that of Christianizing the social order? Simply this: that when one surveys the impact of religion upon the historic cultures of mankind it becomes clear that public celebrations dramatizing basic beliefs have a tremendous effect in establishing the axioms of social life. But we do not have to delve into the history of religions. Before our eyes the rival ideologies of communism, fascism and naziism are surrounding themselves with a symbolism of their own and proclaiming their beliefs in public demonstrations essentially religious in character, even though we may claim the religion to be false. Their cultus is the whole complex of public activities and spectacular celebrations, largely military, which create a distinctive pattern of life and thought, and generate the emotions necessary to enforce the dogma of the state.

So a society basically Christian will have its own appropriate forms of public religious celebration. But since custom and the recurrence of occasions are elements of a genuine cultus, they must grow with the Christian culture of which

they are a part. A cultus cannot be made to order or spring into being overnight. Nor can a committee compile what it thinks a suitable liturgy for a socially-conscious Christian community and expect by the use of it to make the participants socially conscious. Both logically and in time sequence the Word of Prophecy and the Evangel of the Kingdom are prior to a form of common worship which must be a response to something already present in the experience of the worshiping group. Yet the hearing of the Word and the acceptance of the Good News will call for the treasuring up of the religious impulse and its expression not only in "practical" terms of ethical living, but in worship which gives utterance to "those things which break through language and escape." The function of cultus is not to plan the battle or to lead the van but to gird the warriors on the eve of battle and sustain them through the long campaign. Victory, in the last resort, is dependent on the morale, the spiritual quality of the soldiers themselves, and on their *esprit de corps,* the sense of comradeship in the service of a cause.

Some ultimate conviction about the source and meaning of life, the nature of man and of his society, in the end dominates the forms of social life. Hence any authentic human culture is rooted in a religion of some sort, "uttered, or [as now in Russia] unexpressed."[1] And the recurrent rites for which men come together affirm and reaffirm that ultimate faith which makes them members one of another, and is the constituent factor of their society and the ground of its being.

Hence in cultus there is a fundamental historical element, or, in default of history, a mythological story purporting to relate the happenings out of which the community arose with its distinctive beliefs and way of life. There is, secondly, an

[1] One is reminded of the parable of the two sons sent to work in the vineyard, and of Jesus' biting comment, Matt. 21:28–31.

element of reflection on present or recent experiences in the light of these beliefs and corresponding readjustment to their way of life. Third, there is the renewal of personal and social vitality through mystical participation in the sources of life believed in. These statements are generally true, whether we are speaking of the cultus of a primitive religion, of Christian worship — Catholic or Reformed — or of "man's other religion," the mystic nationalism of the totalitarian state.

It is the business of cultus to preserve, transmit and display that organic structure of vital ideas and beliefs by which the society orders its life. But the display is not just a spectacle which men watch passively; it is their own, the society's articulation to itself of that which it holds precious. The elements of the "spectacle" may, indeed, be far from spectacular in themselves — perhaps only a significant handclasp, or the moving moment when a great assembly stands silent. Significant words will be uttered, but bare words are inadequate for the high moments of celebration and of worship. Otherwise it would be sufficient to issue a proclamation or to pass a resolution. In public worship a dramatic element is needed to clothe intellectual convictions with the colour that makes them emotionally compelling, to stir the imagination and to stimulate the will. And the use of symbols conveys more than can be comprehended solely in intellectual terms, simply because man is more than a walking intellect and the Reality with which he has to do is deeper than all definitions.

A definition is co-extensive with its idea, as a sign-post conveys certain exact information and nothing more. But there is a sense in which all worship is sacramental, as there is a sense in which all life is sacramental. A symbol or a sacrament conveys by suggestion a spiritual fact with which it is in no way equal. It is the point at which a spiritual

reality becomes apparent and apprehensible, which otherwise might remain abstract and unreal. So, in the night in which he was betrayed, when words alone failed even the master teacher, the Lord Jesus took bread, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, " This is my body."

It is no accident that this ceremony, either in its original simplicity or elaborated in recognition of its supreme importance, has been continued as the central rite of Christendom. Here common bread and plain man's drink become luminous with meaning and more precious than the gold the world possesses. The meal in common is the seal of that fellowship of persons in which God himself draws near to man. The broken bread betokens a life given up that Life may triumph over the forces that would destroy it. Here men see and know in their inmost being that love is stronger than evil and the way of the Kingdom more satisfying and enduring than the world's way of conflict and possession, domination and exploitation. Here faith in God, the Father of all, verges on sight. Faith in one's fellow man and love of neighbour, with new hope in the coming Kingdom, are kindled like a flame that cannot be put out.

The recognition of the place and power of symbolic rites in human affairs is essential for those who are working for the reconstruction of society upon a spiritual basis. Christians who see the necessity of economic change because of capitalism's denial of the first principles of our religion should be the first to see also that the forms of public worship must make those principles clear and compelling. The formal formlessness of many Protestant services, their emphasis on the rational and utilitarian almost to the exclusion of the symbolic and dramatic, and the masking of the gaps with patches of meaningless sentimentality, reflect the cultural shallowness and " self-sufficient finitude " [2] of capitalist so-

[2] Cf. Tillich, *The Religious Situation,* pp. 19, 54, 82.

ciety and do nothing to change it. Man must have some symbol of the Kingdom, some vehicle worthy to express his reverence and his hope, some authentic voice of the human spirit refusing to be the slave of economic processes and aspiring to the liberty of the children of God. And yet, except for the sermon relatively little is done to utilize this immensely potent instrument of worship and to give to every part of it direction, movement and meaning. Hymns are chosen merely because they are familiar; hence all too often men sing what they do not believe and are given no opportunity to affirm that which most needs affirmation. All of the service except "the talk" is contemptuously dismissed as "the preliminaries" — which is not to be wondered at when it begins nowhere and ends in the same place.[3]

But the very gathering for worship is itself an occasion and a ceremony essentially dramatic. The most should be made of the fact. The idea of the Kingdom is only a skeleton, until it is clothed with emotion rooted in reverence and understanding. An idea or a faith which lacks "incarnation" or dramatic embodiment will remain ineffective. It was not Wesley's ideas or his theology so much as the drama of his going to the poor, his tireless journeys and his great meetings that moved England. As Whitehead has said: "That religion will conquer which can render clear to popular understanding some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact. . . ." "It is our business to recreate and reenact a vision of the world."[4] The gospel of the Kingdom is not a program; it is "a vision of the world," an "eternal greatness" which, by the faith and devotion of Christ's followers, is to become "incarnate in the passage of temporal fact." The Kingdom is more than an idea; it is a

[3] To be fair, one must say that this states the extreme.

[4] Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (Macmillan Co.), pp. 41, 126.

vital belief and an incipient experience "within you,"[5] i.e., "in your fellowship." It must be "placarded" before the eyes of men: first, in the lives of those for whom, in a sense, it has arrived already; and second, in a cultus of which it is the key-note. "Cultus" is used here in a very broad sense to include, in addition to public symbolic rites, the whole range of activities of the religious society in so far as these embody and express its central faith. It will be various and richly human as the mystic sense of the holy community displaces the rationalistic, mechanistic, power and money motivation of the present social order.

The cultus embodies and exhibits the meaning of the Christian culture it is helping to create. Its particular function is to bring that meaning to a focus at points of peculiar importance for life. And here we cannot ignore the paradox of human experience; on the one hand, man the lonely soul, whose experience is his own and no one else's; on the other, man participating in those relationships without which he would not be a man at all. The cultus will take account of the crises of every man's life story, his birth, adolescence, initiation to mature responsibilities, his marriage, parenthood, death. It will relate these personal (and largely unique) events to the underlying meaning of all existence and to man's deathless heritage as a child of God.

Similarly, the cultus will take account of crises in the corporate life. Turning points of the past which have resulted in significant contribution to the present will be commemorated by anniversary celebrations, because the life of the community goes on when the life of the individual comes to a stop. The story of past generations is part of the community's story. In present crises too, days of decision and times of trial and disaster, the public assembly for worship will confront the urgent problems of the present in the light

[5] "Entos humōn"; the "you" is plural. Luke 17:21.

of the eternal principles of the Christian society. Again, there will be recurrent rites, related to the rhythm of day and night and of the seasons, important for the life of man in his relationship to the natural world. For man is part of nature; he sustains his life with the fruits of the ground and finds in the order and beauty of the natural world a manifestation of God. In building his society he cannot ignore the physical base of its life, and his religion will establish his organic and spiritual relationship with the world where God has placed him. Finally, the cultus will provide for periodic recollection and celebration of the faith by reason of which the community exists as a religious society, and the review of experience in its light. Daily prayers, a weekly assembly, a calendar of festivals provide for the repeated articulation by which the faith is saved from becoming dormant.

If the church is to have a role in the reconstruction of our social order, the nature and quality of its cultus is thus a matter far from negligible. None need the steadying strength of worship more than those most acutely aware of the dangerous tensions and disintegrating forces in contemporary society. Common utterance and common action forge the bonds of the fellowship of the Kingdom, and must be worthy of the ends they serve. The rites of common worship will tend the flame kindled by the torch of the prophet and bring its light to bear upon all human experience.

IX

THE MARXIST CHALLENGE

INITIALLY, at least, we shall assume that this is a challenge presented to Christians by Marxism. This suggests a contrast — even an antithesis — between Christianity and Marxism. In order to exhibit the contrast or the antithesis it would be necessary first to state in clear outline: (a) What Christianity is; (b) What Marxism is. Both have a history, the one much longer in point of time than the other. Hence it is inevitable — for this is the fate or the fulfillment of all ideas, beliefs, programs, movements — that the original teachings of the founder after whom the doctrine is named should have become modified for better or worse to meet changing conditions, overlaid with legend, tradition, precedent, and institutionalized.

We are all prone in our thinking to begin by taking up a position and then finding reasons to support it, evidence to vindicate its soundness; in this instance to assume — the very title suggests it — that there *is* a deep-rooted antithesis or antagonism between Christianity and Marxism, and then to look for the necessary evidence. And the distressing feature of this particular search is that it is so easy to find just what we are looking for. Marx knew this, and Jesus. "But what went ye out for to see?" An unstable revolutionary

regime, the product of the tsarist collapse? Consider the failure of Allied intervention. "But wherefore went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea I say unto you, and much more than a prophet." A little later we shall consider some of the most prevalent misconceptions of Marxism and shall suggest that they arise, in large part, from this same inability to see anything other than what we expect to find, to admit categories of thought, ethical assumptions, other than those of our own immediate tradition. Two factors should, however, now assist us in our effort to do this. One is the actual bankruptcy, the imminent collapse, of this bourgeois tradition, particularly its failure to devise an ethic that can claim our allegiance; the other lies in the dialectic nature of Christian teaching. The negation of negation, the interpenetration of opposites, the law of qualitative change — do these dialectical principles strike so strangely on ears attuned to doctrines of repentance, of atonement, of reconciliation?

In earlier chapters the effort has been made to answer the first question: What is Christianity? But what is Marxism? Marxism is: (a) The set of ideas and the social program worked out by Karl Marx; (b) the history of those ideas and that program from the time of their formulation down to the present day; (c) the import of this historical realization for the future. Hence we need to know: (a) Just what Marx said and taught and did; (b) what has happened to his teaching in the hands of his followers; (c) who his followers are and what is happening to them. We shall then be in a position to discover — or shall at least stand a much better chance of discovering — whether Marxism and Christianity *do* stand opposed to each other; whether the one challenges the other; whether this challenge should be met or disregarded.

Both Christianity and Marxism are here spoken of as though they were things, things of the spirit perhaps, living things, having a history and a power to affect the lives of men

and women. And so they are. But it is equally true that they are both living persons and actual fellowships of people. We express this by referring to the Christian church, or churches, on the one hand and the Marxist party, or parties, on the other. It is possible to be, oneself, a member of one or the other, perhaps of both. It is possible to leave the one and to join the other. (Berdyaev has this dedication in a book of his: "I dedicate this book to the memory of Karl Marx who was the social master of my youth and whose opponent in ideas I have now become.") This is important. What would happen to a Marxist who became really convinced of the soundness of Christianity? He would become a Christian. What happens to the Christian who becomes convinced of the soundness of Marxism? He becomes a Marxist. In becoming the one, must one cease to be the other? That is the ultimate question of this chapter. It should be added that the term "conviction" is used here to imply the process of commitment on the foundation of intellectual recognition. But we know that the connection is not a necessary one in the life of man.[1] That is the point of Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it."

The Communist Manifesto is both a statement of position and a call to action. (In religious terminology it is both a creed and an evangel.) Its opening and its closing sentences — what deathless splendour a clarion phrase may win! — are of the stuff of action. "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism." (The axe is laid unto the root of the trees. . . . Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? . . . And the people asked him saying: What shall we do then? He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat let him do likewise.

[1] See S. Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 113.

. . . Then came also publicans: Master, what shall we do? . . . The soldiers likewise demanded: What shall we do? . . .) "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite." Prophetic, propagandist, a preaching of woes and a call to action. What shall we do to be saved? Organize, unite. "The bourgeoisie produces its own gravediggers. . . . The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated. . . . In place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."[2]

This is the language of action. But the Manifesto is more than a call to action. It is that call based on a sharp, trenchant analysis of the condition of man, not in a state of nature — "continued fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" — but in the present state of society: "In every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class (the bourgeoisie) without, at the same

[2] The quotations from the Communist Manifesto are taken from the Modern Library Edition of Marx's writings, compiled by Max Eastman.

time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class-distinction and class-struggles."

I. The Class Struggle

The history of society is seen then as one of struggle between classes. There are certain salient moments in this history, well-marked stages in a cataclysmic cycle: master and slave, feudal lord and serf, capitalist and wage-worker, these (though in point of time they may overlap) are successive forms of exploitation, successive phases of a process moving to its dramatic climax. Why does one give place to the next? The causes are many — new modes of production arise, new markets are discovered, new technical devices introduced, political power is gradually acquired by the exploited group. With each crisis, with each shift of power, there occurs, however, a simplification of the struggle, a clarification of the issues, a sharper cleavage between the opposing forces: " Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat." Class society then enters upon its ultimate struggle, one which must continue until, with the liquidation of the bourgeoisie, the class war is ended and a classless society comes to birth.

It is perhaps necessary to add that in the context of Marxism a social " class " consists of a section of the population related to the processes of economic production in a certain way. The proletariat is defined as that section of the population which has at its disposal only its own labour power, and which sells this outright, or tries to sell it, to the highest bidder in return for the means of subsistence. The propertyless unemployed are thus included in the class of the proletariat, as are also the dependents of the proletarian worker. While it is sufficiently clear that Marx has in mind chiefly the in-

dustrial worker, the factory hand, the day labourer and weekly wage-earner together with their dependents and those available for this kind of work who are not at present employed, it may admittedly be argued that this group cannot be clearly defined as a " class " in just this way.

According to Marx, the fundamental source of wealth is human labour and the form of wealth accumulation which constitutes capitalist exploitation is the alienation of part of the products of this labour from the labourer-producer to and by another, the capitalist, who is enabled to do this because of his ownership or control of the materials and the means of production. It might seem then that these latter, the materials and means of production, also constitute wealth, and indeed a more tangible and ultimate form of wealth than human labour itself. But this is to misconstrue the nature of wealth. An economic value is conferred upon materials (raw and instrumental) by human labour, or rather it arises in the intercourse of man with materials. To gain, by conquest, usurpation, inheritance or legal manipulation, control of the materials is therefore to control the processes of production whereby wealth is created and to be in a position to divert it from producer to exploiter.

With the development of joint stock companies and the elaboration of a highly complicated technique for the investment of capital in productive enterprise, it may well be that some producers of wealth (in the Marxist sense) may also be, or become, part owners of the means of production, and hence exploiters. This is true, but it does not constitute a valid objection to the Marxist analysis, for two main reasons. First, these part owners (e.g., skilled workmen who may invest savings in industrial stocks, or whose bank deposits may be so invested by the banks themselves) are not genuinely in a position of control. The direction of the processes of production and investment is really in the hands

of boards of directors, whose larger stock holdings and whose control of absentee votes enable them to coerce the smaller stockholders. Second, it is the very system of private ownership and control of the materials and means of production which renders exploitation possible, indeed inevitable.

Hence the Marxist attack is directed primarily against the system rather than against any particular members of the population. It is incidental, though fruitful of confusion and fraught with dire possibilities of personal animosity, that particular persons function as the most obvious beneficiaries of the system, and that others may, because of lesser interests or even mistaken notions as to their interests, wish and act to perpetuate that system. Nevertheless, the profound psychological effect upon the investing public of thus spreading the opportunity to reap unearned profits (an opportunity entailing unpredictable risks of loss) may well be such as to retard incalculably the growth of a strong public opinion antagonistic to the system itself.

It may further be objected that, in some countries at least, certain members of the industrial proletariat and many or most of the agricultural proletariat own their own homes and their own farms. In the latter case it seems clear that ownership of the means of production is directly in the hands of the producers themselves. In both cases there is likely to be opposition to items one and nine of the measures which are listed in the Communist Manifesto as "pretty generally applicable" in achieving the ends of the communist revolution: (1) Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes; (9) combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.

Noteworthy, to begin with, is the general proviso accompanying this list: "These measures will of course be dif-

ferent in different countries." Marx was familiar with an agricultural economy consisting of large hereditary estates, with tenant farmers and a virtually propertyless peasantry. In his day indeed agriculture had scarcely emerged in Europe from feudal conditions. One is tempted therefore to say simply that the North American agriculturist cannot be classified, according to the Marxist scheme, as a proletarian. He is a member of still another class, to which the Marxist analysis does not apply.

But let us think the problem through a bit further. This very ownership of home and farm, how secure is it? How permanent a feature is it of our present economy? Accumulating indebtedness, the direct result of crop failure or failure to market crops advantageously, leads to foreclosure, eviction, expropriation of the farmer, just as the Ford householder faces the loss of his home through unemployment and consequent inability to continue meeting payments. Moreover, in the case of the farmer, his individual ownership of his farm means little unless the marketing of crops and produce is also under his control. In a country which has recently seen the results of an official inquiry into price spreads and mass buying in agricultural as well as in mine and factory products, it should scarcely be necessary to labour this point further. Fundamentally, the Marxist attack is directed against the exploitation of any one group in the community by another, and where such exploitation exists it matters little whether Marx himself was familiar with its exact technique. In it we come face to face again with the fact of the class struggle. Frankly, however, it may be admitted that to convince farmer and industrial worker of their community of interest and of the identity of the insecurity that engulfs them both is perhaps the most difficult social task of our day and country. One has only to think of the debate concerning a proposed clause in the Co-operative Commonwealth

Federation Manifesto, dealing with the nationalization of land, to appreciate the difficulty of this task.

There is a classic paragraph in the Manifesto as to the role of intellectuals in the class struggle: "Finally, in times when the class-struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class — in fact, within the whole range of an old society — assumes such a violent, glaring character that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole." There is no doubt exaggeration in confining this realignment of individual allegiance to the "decisive hour of dissolution," particularly when we note that both Marx and Lenin were by birth members of the bourgeoisie rather than of the proletariat.

One notes here that Marx assigns to the intellectual a function which is active as well as contemplative. He may "supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress," but in order to do so he must first become one of them. Achieving a theoretical comprehension is not enough. This is, of course, essential. But whereas such a writer as Julien Benda describes intellectuals as "all those whose activity essentially is *not* the pursuit of practical aims, all those who seek their joy in the practice of an art or a science or metaphysical speculation, in short in the possession of non-material advantages, and hence in a certain manner say: 'My kingdom is not of this world,'" [3] Marx would protest

[3] Reprinted from *The Treason of the Intellectuals,* copyrighted 1928, William Morrow and Co., Inc., p. 30.

that such a definition perpetrates a dichotomy of thought and practice which is dialectically inadmissible.

Most of us know this to-day. We know that our ivory tower is founded on privilege and patronage, even though of such an enlightened kind that it permits and encourages freedom of thought and speech. Recently a teacher of fine arts in a privately endowed university said to the author: "I'm glad I teach art, and not economics or philosophy. It is less dangerous." Of course a Marxist would reject this view of art, too, but this is not at the moment the point in question. In order to be intellectuals, professionally at least, in contemporary society we have to acquiesce, willingly or under protest, in a system of unequal educational opportunity, and though its scope may be widened by the beneficence of public-spirited individuals and enlightened governments, even that enlargement by no means corrects the economic inequalities which it presupposes and which make it possible. Incidentally, our acquiescence may be the more cheerful if we can honestly point to communities or conditions wherein our position would be still more false, or our freedom still more narrowly restricted.

There is also a more profound issue involved. According to Marx, no learning is utterly disinterested; all knowledge is partisan, and especially knowledge of history, economics, society. This means, for instance, that the effort to delineate the *facts* of sociology or economics, while remaining resolutely neutral as to the ethical values involved in and implied by those facts, is in the last analysis illusory. Marxism itself is a "class theory," not in the sense alone that it is a theory concerning social classes as existent phenomena, but also that it is at the same time the protagonist of one set of class interests. It cannot be otherwise. The aristocrat may prefer to assign an organic, biologically hereditary origin to class differences; the bourgeois ideologist may

fail to find any class divisions in society, or may dismiss them as ephemeral and accidental; but in so doing they also show that their knowledge is partisan. Does this reduce all knowledge to opinion and deny all meaning to truth? No. "Truth is above classes," but it is revealed exclusively to no one class. As Hook puts it, all our theories "express resolutions as well as descriptions," they are compounded of valuations as well as of truth.[4]

Nevertheless the aim of disinterestedness is not thereby invalidated, any more than it invalidates the quest for truth to show that no man is infallible. And, returning to Julien Benda, one may perhaps recover and prize that ivory tower attitude which is of enduring worth. The intellectual is not to be praised for his refusal to descend into the market place. But his descent is marked, if it be sincerely intellectual, by notable signs. His interest is not primarily self-centred. His passion is social and wholehearted, not born of fear, resentment, prejudice. And lastly: "There exists a certain criterion by which we may know whether the 'clerk' who takes public action does so in conformity with his true functions; and that is, that he is immediately reviled by the laymen, whose interest he thwarts (Socrates, Jesus). We may say beforehand that the 'clerk' who is praised by the laymen is a traitor to his office."[5]

II. Political Action

It is an axiom of Marxist theory that redress of social ills awaits concentrated and calculated political action, that indeed nothing short of revolutionary change can attain the necessary end. The exact form of this action will, however, depend, initially at least, on the existing political forms in

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 108.
[5] Benda, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

any country. It is flagrantly at variance with the spirit of Marxism to interpret this axiom as indicating the inevitable and permanent suppression of civil liberties, as constituting a deliberate cultivation of violence and irresponsible dictatorship. "The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." Nevertheless, it becomes increasingly clear that violence may accompany the struggle, and that not by any means because of the adoption of any cult of violence on the part of the workers themselves, but because it is thrust upon them by the unwillingness, the refusal of vested interests to relinquish their position without a struggle, and because of the equally determined refusal of the workers to be satisfied with palliative half measures and treacherously temporizing reforms.

Capitalism is by no means averse to the forms of political democracy, providing it is at liberty to manipulate them in its own interests. But its allegiance to democratic institutions is secondary and opportunist only, and it will readily acquiesce in, even precipitate, their abrogation as soon as they become a serious menace to dividends, to the rights of private property, to the unhampered exploitation of a "free" labour market. It thus becomes an integral part of the Marxist political program to fight strenuously for the preservation of civil liberties where those liberties still genuinely obtain; to combat fascism and suppression of freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly.

Yet the obverse of the myth of "freedom," which capitalism sedulously and dexterously disseminates in its own interests, is the interference with freedom which communism (or its protagonists) practises as an interim ethic. Such a dialectic is realistically grim, but is it necessary? And if necessary what safeguards are there against abuses which may become permanent? One can quote Marx's own an-

swer: "Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonism, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class." Many people will not be satisfied with this answer. They will say, as long ago was said in answer to Hobbes, that to surrender unconditionally all political responsibility in return for an alleged future security — no matter how intolerable our present condition may be — is to take altogether too great a risk. It may be that the results will be as promised, but who can say? The temptations of political power, once seized, are overwhelmingly great. What assurance have we that they will be successfully resisted?

There are two comments relevant here. The first concerns our certainty in regard to those things we most prize. Spinoza probes to the essence of the matter, though one can also find it at the heart of the Christian gospel. "At first sight it seemed unwise willingly to lose hold on what was sure for the sake of something then uncertain. . . . I therefore debated whether it would not be possible to arrive at the new principle, or at any rate at a certainty concerning its existence, without changing the conduct and usual plan of my life; with this end in view I made many efforts, but in vain. . . . I came to the conclusion that by abandoning the ordinary objects of pursuit and betaking myself to a new quest, I should be leaving a good, uncertain by reason of its own nature, for the sake of a good not uncertain in its nature (for I sought for a fixed good), but only uncertain in the possi-

bility of its attainment. Further reflection convinced me that if I could really get to the root of the matter I should be leaving certain evils for a certain good."[6] This in turn makes the second comment a simple corollary. Is it so certain that the existing political devices are inherently evil and corrupt? In Marx's phrases, political power is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If one compares this phrase with another that occurs earlier in the Manifesto one discovers that Marx has the modern state exclusively in mind: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

Now it is surely evident that the bourgeoisie has by no means attained or maintained that unity of outlook or that community of interest among themselves which these quotations imply. Indeed, it is a well-recognized axiom of political sagacity among left-wing politicians that in the internecine conflicts of capitalistic interests there lies one of the strategic opportunities for socialist power. Further, unless and until all hope of achieving genuinely effective change by constitutional means has definitely gone, it would appear to be the height of defeatist folly to ignore or to neglect this alternative. Nevertheless, Spinoza's insight remains the ultimate criterion: What is that good for which we seek? By contrast all lesser goods become uncertain, eventually indeed become certain evils. They "act as hindrances, causing the death not seldom of those who possess them, and always of those who are possessed by them."

III. Dialectic

At the beginning of the chapter it was said that Christians ought to be able to appreciate the significance of the Marxist

[6] Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding.* Translated by Elwes.

dialectic at least as easily as their own theological doctrines. *Ignotum per ignotius,* you protest in dismay? The attempt will therefore be made to suggest the place of dialectic in Marxist thought and practice.[7] Note the double emphasis — thought and practice. The dialectic is first of all a protest against any and all facile bifurcation of nature. All such attempts, philosophically unsatisfactory in the end, are motivated by, or arise out of, class cleavages lacking historical permanence or enduring ontological status. Thought and practice, though evidently distinguishable, are interrelated. If by "practice" one understands most generally the current modes of economic production, the methods of exchange, the forms of social organization, then the existent cultural and thought forms will be conditioned by and appropriate to them. Idealists will at once designate such a doctrine as the crassest materialism, and indeed it is evident that Marx himself, using the Hegelian logic, rejected out of hand the idealist system which formed its context. By contrast, then, Marx's emphasis was necessarily on a dialectical materialism. But essentially the accent is on the relativity of ideas to things, on the inclusion of both within the one natural matrix.

Such a position, salutary as it may be in criticism, is apt to be vague. The doctrine certainly purports to be more biting than generously inclusive monisms usually are. Its laws are laws of change. According to Engels they may be reduced to three:[8] (1) the law of the transition of quantity

[7] The meaning of the term "dialectic" may be indicated by contrasting the processes of debate and discussion. In the former one side or the other prevails; in the latter the truth which emerges may well be the final product of a variety of contributions, reciprocally corrected and refined. Marx, following Hegel, finds such a process occurring in human history. "A historical situation is said to be dialectic when it produces within itself, from inner structural necessity, contradictions which lead on to some new situation, in which these contradictions can be resolved" (John Macmurray, *Creative Society,* p. 9). The process is at work too in human nature: "The whole of history is nothing but the progressive transformation of human nature" (Marx, quoted in S. Hook, *op. cit.,* p. 93).

[8] See Julius F. Hecker, *Moscow Dialogues,* p. 96.

into quality and vice versa; (2) the law of the interpenetration of opposites; (3) the law of the negation of negation.

What, concretely, do these laws mean? It is of course a matter of elementary knowledge that in mathematics "two minuses make a plus," though its demonstration may be more difficult. But what import has this for social change? Logically the interpenetration of opposites (A and non-A) sounds absurd. Why then erect it into the status of an historical law? We are familiar enough with the qualitative change that is effected, under appropriate circumstances, by the combination of hydrogen and oxygen in proper proportions. This is indeed the most intelligible of the three laws; but it is by no means peculiar to Marxism, nor do those writers who, accepting its truth, reject the tendency to reduce biology to physics or psychology to physiology, by any means accept the Marxist analysis of society.

Furthermore there are grave dangers in the current application of the dialectic. Is it so certain, for instance, that in colonial countries the rising tide of nationalism is properly to be regarded as part of the class struggle, or that, though capitalist wars are inherently vicious, there may nevertheless be such a thing as a "good" war — if it be a capitalist attack on fascism, or a capitalist defence of Soviet Russia? Theoretically, are not the non-violent non-co-operation of Gandhi or the Kingdom of God movement of Kagawa as dialectical in their genius as revolutionary communism? [9] Why then

[9] The Christian is disposed, perhaps, in advance to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards these two movements because avowedly they are religiously motivated. It may also be that, precisely for this reason, the communist is disposed to discount or attack them. Neither attitude is adequate. It is worth noting however that the Indian National Congress has moved steadily to the left in recent years and has learned something of the inescapableness of violence in a school of bitter experience. It may be noted too that the Kingdom of God movement is, if not actually approved, at least unmolested by the Japanese government, which regards it as an antidote to, and a bulwark against, communism. These signs are symptomatic, not conclusive.

should they be assailed as counter-revolutionary, as ingenious bourgeois palliatives (even though their authors may be innocent of this intent)?

One can no more delineate with unfailing accuracy the course of history simply by applying the laws of dialectic than one can solve the problems of natural science by a plodding application of the experimental methods of Bacon or Mill. Nevertheless, just as the Baconian enthusiasm for induction was in keeping with the experimental emphasis of the new science, though a most imperfect analysis of its method, so the dialectic stands for a new and needed appreciation of the changeful continuity of human history and an insistent demand that human thought be geared to direct that change.

A recurrent issue in the Marxist view of history concerns the place of violence in social change. Must all effective change be born in bloodshed, in the overthrow of existing institutions? Or may there not occur, at least under favourable conditions, that "broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent" which is said to suit particularly the British political genius? One is reminded here of the issue between Christian education and Christian conversion (Are you saved, brother? No, I went to Sunday school), or the divergent accounts of the coming of the Kingdom of God: "It cometh not with observation," "It suffereth violence and men of violence take it by force." Both moments are certainly to be found in the gospel, but which is primary? It is not our task to settle this matter, but, returning to the problem in its Marxist setting, it may be said that for Marx "revolution is the political mode by which social evolution takes place."[10] It becomes the task of the skilful observer of historical processes so to organize proletarian forces and so to direct their impact upon their oppressors that action is effectively taken at the right moment and in the right way. To quote Lenin:

[10] S. Hook, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

"In various moments of economic evolution, in dependence on various conditions, political, national, cultural, social, etc., various forms of struggle are brought to the forefront. . . . To attempt to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question of a definite means of struggle, without examining in detail the concrete situation of a given moment at a given stage of its development, means to depart altogether from the Marxian ground."[11] And of course no true Marxist would claim infallibility. He may misjudge historical conditions, and such misjudgment may have serious consequences in delaying the achievement of his ultimate goal. It is apposite to remark, however, that such a position is clearly incompatible with the position of absolute pacifism adopted by some Christians and that on the whole Marxists are disposed to charge Christians with too tender-minded and optimistic a reliance upon ameliorative and gradual methods of social change, with failure to appreciate the *saccadic*[12] movement of history.

In as striking phrases as could be found it was emphasized earlier that Marxism was a program of action as well as a theoretical analysis of social history, the one intimately involved in the other. The emphasis on the necessity for political action has found expression in the organization of explicitly communist political parties in those countries where that proved to be legally possible and healthy, and of "underground" parties with an ingenious "cell" structure in states proscribing and suppressing such organization. By no means surprising, perhaps, are the internal dissensions — in relation to both theoretical issues and questions of procedure — within and between communist parties. These are the harrying, perhaps the purging, experiences of all bearers of revo-

[11] Quoted in Hecker, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

[12] This technical term, taken from the field of psychology where it is used of sudden rapid eye-movements or change of fixation-point as in reading, seems peculiarly fitted to designate sudden dramatic developments in history. The idea, though not the term, was adopted by Marx.

lutionary ideas. By contrast with this reference to dissension there stands the impressive record of discipline imposed on and accepted by the membership of the party. Responsibility for specific tasks, service on particular "fronts," contributions to party funds determined by size of income — in matters such as these the discipline adopted might well be studied and copied by Christian groups.

The formation of a political party seeking, in democratic countries, the election of popular representatives on a communist platform, is only one aspect of the class struggle and one which, in the last analysis, is not relied on with any undue optimism. Side by side with this there goes on an unceasing campaign on the "labour front" — participation in and fomentation of trade union activities, insistence on the right to collective bargaining and to strike, legal defence of all victims of the class struggle (widely interpreted and sometimes skilfully exploited, as in the Scottsboro case), organization of the unemployed with articulation given to their rights and grievances. Quite recently, too, though this marks a deliberate and in some quarters a disconcerting change of policy, united fronts with non-communist groups have been formed in relation to specific issues, e.g., the Popular Front in the last Spanish and French elections, and the League against War and Fascism in a number of countries.

IV. Popular Misconceptions and Subsequent Developments

In the Communist Manifesto Marx has himself dealt swiftly and scathingly with several objections voiced in his own day and still repeated by ready critics. Not the abolition of all private property (the right to own one's own toothbrush), but of "the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation." Not the abolition of cul-

ture, but its transformation into an indigenous and genuinely universal expression of the creative spirit of man. "That culture, the loss of which the bourgeois laments, is for the enormous majority a mere training to act as a machine." Not the abolition of the family; "the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production." And patriotism? It requires a strong measure of the uncompromising realism of Marxism to withstand and to expose the travesty upon honest pride of birth and place that is now acclaimed as the virtue of patriotism. No surer defence can be found against the illusions of patriotism, no more potent antidote for the poisons of anti-Semitism and other forms of race prejudice. By contrast, it is a matter of record that in the post-war period no country has accorded to the national minorities within its borders fairer treatment than has Soviet Russia.

The Marxist, it is said, advocates class war. Exactly the opposite is in fact true. The Marxist proposes to eliminate class war, to achieve a classless society. But because it is still, amazingly, possible for some to believe that but for the Marxist we should now have no class struggle, this fallacy persists. An analogy may not be too misleading. It might be urged against Darwin that he advocated the struggle for survival among species and among individuals. Rather he *found* a struggle locked where placid myopic eyes had formerly seen a settled harmonious scene. (It is worth mentioning that Engels himself, after stating the fundamental proposition of Marxism, added: "This proposition, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology.") The analogy is instructive. "Class consciousness" is advocated. The struggle, which means the enslavement, the pauperization, the brutalization of the proletariat, is rendered less uneven, is indeed assured of ultimate victory, by the sturdy recognition on the part of its members

of their class solidarity. Therewith, aided by the contradictions inherent in capitalism itself, they achieve their own salvation and the regeneration of society.

Certain significant modifications have appeared since Marx's own time in the orthodox Marxist interpretation of history. Imperialism is seen as the logical outgrowth of an expanding capitalism in control of the colonial and foreign policy of the state. "Imperialism," says Lenin, "is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by the international trusts has begun, and in which the partition of all the territory of the earth by the greatest capitalist countries has been completed."[13] International wars are the result of opposing imperialist ambitions; wars which, whatever the outcome, leave the basic exploitation of the masses unchanged. Wars of colonial expansion indeed aggravate this basic exploitation by extending its scope to native populations, and, by finding and using new and cheaper labour, depressing still further the wages and conditions of labour in the home country. Moreover, some of the exploiters have seized on these internecine imperialist struggles, have in fact fomented them to their own advantage. Armament rings, steel cartels, industrial and financial trusts have discovered the exploitability of capitalistic exploitation, the new markets made available by the struggle for markets.

The obverse of this process is that nationalism develops in areas of colonial annexation as an intense struggle for freedom from the yoke of the aggressor. Such conditions potentially ally oppressed native peoples with the industrial and peasant proletariat, and the struggle for national self-

[13] Lenin, *Imperialism,* Chap. VII. See Emile Burns, *Handbook of Marxism,* p. 690.

determination becomes a phase of the class struggle, though one wherein the issues often become confused. It is clear that the struggle against the foreign aggressor, even if waged successfully, may simply leave the native capitalist in control or may remove direct political suzerainty without eradicating economic tyranny.

Contemporary Marxism is inexorably opposed to fascism, which it regards as capitalism's last stand. In the effort to protect vested interests capitalism discards its doctrine of individual liberty, or reinterprets it so that freedom is made to involve implicit obedience to constituted state authority and to be unrealizable apart from the absolute or totalitarian state.[14] It further borrows some — though not the essential — tenets of socialism. Instead of advocating a minimum of "government interference" in business and industry it now subordinates these to the control of the state in order that the power of the state may be won for the preservation of the existing order. It assumes a more drastic interest in the problem of unemployment, solving it usually by creating a huge standing army which can in turn be used for national protection and for foreign wars. It sedulously propagates a variety of sociological myths which, however preposterous, have as their object the achievement of a fanatically irrational solidarity of national sentiment.

The Marxist is so acutely aware of the inimical impact of fascism that he is disposed to meet solidarity with solidarity, to match strength with strength, propaganda with propaganda. Hence, partly, the emergence of "popular fronts" in several countries recently. He will join forces with all parties that are in opposition to fascist tendencies, seeking to consolidate them in a concerted struggle to preserve civil liberties.

[14] It is sometimes argued that communism, like fascism, implies the creation of a totalitarian state. Theoretically, at least, the two are poles apart; whereas fascist philosophy explicitly glorifies and absolutizes the state, communism envisages its ultimate abolition.

It may well be that there are serious flaws in the Marxist analysis of fascism. Certainly it illustrates the resiliency, or perhaps the doggedness, of capitalism, and it would hence be criminally unwise to belittle its power or even its stability. It was an axiom of the Ricardian view of human nature that every man was naturally alive to his own best (economic) interest, and this belief has had its place too in Marxist writings, thus making it possible to appeal to the proletariat not on grounds of any high idealism but on those of sheer self or class interest. The assumption is — perhaps regrettably — false. It underestimates the ingenuity of those who would exploit their fellows and our own unfortunate willingness so often to accept the shadow for the substance. It flatters unduly our capacity for rational insight. It was pardonably reasonable, no doubt, in those halcyon days prior to the development of the modern technique of propaganda masquerading as education, to the subtleties of which none of us is wholly immune.

We perhaps underestimate also the power of fascism to interfere drastically with what the Marxist seems sometimes to refer to too blithely as the inevitable course of history. It is at least at present an open question whether fascism postpones or precipitates the crisis inherent in capitalism, whether indeed it may even impose upon us an artificially new social order still bereft essentially of justice or universality, an order whose key concept is *Autarchie,* understood both economically and politically.

However that may be, it becomes increasingly apparent that fascism is a serious menace to our chances of attaining to our full human stature individually and collectively. In this emergency the world has even greater need of those whom Marx himself describes, and to whose number he so magnificently belonged: those "who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole." They are men and women who have

somehow risen above their own immediate interests and who by so doing have won the only sure protection against the beguilements of emotionally-toned appeals to prejudice and love of power. And this condition is essentially religious.

V. The Challenge to Christianity

Marx is not by any means the only political theorist to deal seriously and antagonistically with organized Christianity. Both Hobbes and Rousseau do likewise. But whereas they deem it wise — even necessary — that the authority of the state should be secured by religious sanctions, Marx rejects the whole business of such sanctions as being superstitious and false. In this comparison two half-truths come to light. Rousseau is right in this, that genuine Christianity cannot be made the champion of the national state — he might as truthfully have said, of the capitalist state. They come inevitably into opposition. And Marx is right in this, that in so far as religion performs the function of adducing supernatural sanctions for any order of society it becomes "the opium of the people." In an existing unjust social order it is reactionary and vicious if it does so; in a just order it is an unnecessary anachronism.

Now these two half-truths need to be put together. Because of the one, Rousseau rejects Christianity and advocates a deliberately utilitarian religion — not realizing perhaps that no vital religion is ever so speciously the product of deliberation. Because of the other, Marx rejects all religion, thereby — perhaps again unwittingly — assuming that with the achievement of a classless society man's full stature will have been attained and that no further growth is conceivable. Both misapprehend the nature, the function and the vitality of religion. It is not superimposed; it is the integration of the whole of life; its function is social as well

as consolatory, and these two may and must be harmonized realistically. It is not put on or off as a garment, and can be discarded about as easily as history itself.

What bearing has this analysis on the contemporary scene? Clearly this. Fascism[15] appeals to supernatural, mythical sanctions in the effort to maintain a social order and outlook essentially fragmentary, lacking equilibrium, productive of international tension and internal oppression. Communism rejects all such sanctions and hence, it believes, becomes the inveterate foe of all religion. Can the Christian rightly discriminate friend from foe? The task is a stern test of the genuineness of his own religion. In so far as it is identified inseparably with conventional ecclesiastical institutions, in so far as it relieves him of vital concern for existing injustice, in so far as its sanctions or its "hopes of heaven" obscure his social vision, it will prove inadequate to the present hour. It is what Professor Macmurray has called pseudo-religion. The Christian cannot, on the other hand, even if he would and this were the only alternative, join the Communist Party. He is debarred by a condition which would make him repudiate his Christianity. Hence the obviousness of his immediate task as a Christian: "Attack pseudo-Christianity openly and resolutely in all its forms, in the name of real Christianity. The religious revolution is the immediate and special responsibility of the Christians. Unless we can vindicate the substantial material reality of our religion we are powerless to do anything effective. There must be war to the death between real and unreal religion, even if it should cleave organized Christianity in two and destroy all its existing forms.

[15] This abrupt transition should not be taken to imply that Rousseau preached fascism. Obviously such an inference does violence to history. Actually indeed there is some evidence that Rousseau was uncertain whether or not to include his chapter on civil religion in *The Social Contract*. The chapter is therefore referred to, out of its context, simply as a *locus classicus* for the point of view it expresses (See *The Social Contract*, Book IV, Chap. 8).

That is the primary task; and it has to be achieved concretely in terms of the Christian denunciation and criticism of the existing structure of society, in its effects upon the lives of men and women." [16]

The present volume is seen as a contribution to this task. It therefore appears that the Marxist challenge is simply, but momentously, a challenge to Christianity to fulfill its appointed task, to make real its own gospel. It is a challenge which strikes again the note of solemn warning voiced by Jesus to "the chief priests and the elders of the people": "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

[16] John Macmurray, *Creative Society*, p. 147. See also Chap. IV.

ERIC HAVELOCK

X

THE NEW SOCIETY

ONE hundred and thirty millions of people now inhabit the North American continent. They or their forefathers were for the most part poor emigrants who left Europe behind them and crossed the sea to settle in a strange land. They came in search of freedom, and also of wealth. The continent they left behind was already wealthy, civilized with the effort of over two thousand years, but it was not free to them. Because they lacked land or money or status, because they were close-bound in the structure of a European class society, they came to America in search of the new society which, if they had cared to define it in terms of their obscure longing, would have been defined as an equalitarian society wherein there was freedom for all and there were no poor.

The land to which they came is wealthy now beyond dream of the early settlers, but it is not yet equalitarian. It is growing wealthy as Europe has grown, with a rich and leisured minority and a growing majority who toil. But at least it is wealthy; field and forest and mine have yielded their tribute.

And yet, though the gift is nature's, she has not given it freely. The continent was not settled and civilized without

a bitter struggle. It was potentially rich in the days of the North American Indian, but it did not smile on him, for he failed to come to terms with the land or subdue it by his toil. He maintained a precarious existence subject to disease and famine. The first white settlers, though scarcely more secure at first, brought a very different promise: they could use tools and achieve a social organization of which the red man never dreamt. But the desperate struggle with nature went on as supplies against winter famine and summer drought were patiently accumulated and then the timber and minerals torn from the earth to build machines and cities — the essential basis of modern civilized life.

The expansion of the North American frontier is only just over. The new land and the new resources in the land are only just now fully occupied. The pioneer years and their frugal virtues are still close in the experience of the people of Canada and the United States.

This story of a struggle to dominate the natural resources of a continent within the short span of three hundred years serves as a reminder of how unceasing and, as it would seem, endless, has been man's struggle with nature. He has hitherto lived in societies in which there was never quite enough to go round. Discomfort and famine have been his normal lot. His experience has in a sense always been a frontier experience. The brief cultures of the past of which we know anything, the Mesopotamian, the Egyptian, the Graeco-Roman, have been as islands in a sea which continually threatened to encroach on them and which finally overcame them. At the height of their power and prosperity the lot of the common man remained insecure, his status that of a slave or else close to it. And these things were not the result of any villainy or stupidity in man; they merely reflected the hard fact that he lived in a scarcity economy. The empires which rose and fell were sustained on a precarious food

supply. The materials for tools and manufactured goods were always hard to seek and hard to fashion. Even a primitive plough was precious. If the history of these earlier cultures seems to read otherwise, telling a story of ease and security, that is only because the history has been created for us by those that enjoyed the ease, and they were very few. The art and literature of the past which compose the record were sustained by a leisured minority who alone achieved the essentials of what the Greeks considered the good life. The daily economic struggle of the worker and the slave and the serf did not seem significant and passed unrecorded.

In such frontier societies many things will be accepted and tolerated because they seem necessary. Certain social institutions and habits in an age of scarcity come to seem inevitable. In particular, the private ownership of wealth has come to seem inevitable. The control of real wealth has always meant the control of the means of production, whether it be the land which grows the food without which man cannot live, or the buildings and machines and money without which he cannot live the good life. These have hitherto been throughout man's history mainly owned and administered as private property; experiments in social ownership have been the exception, not the rule. There were many reasons for this. In the struggle to wrest from nature a bare living for man it seemed necessary to mobilize any powers and faculties available for the struggle. The sense of ownership, which whetted the acquisitive instinct and increased competition, thus had its uses, for acquisitiveness, while it may not be the most fundamental trait in human character, is the one readiest to mobilize. Moreover, despite its moral disadvantages the arrangement seemed tolerable because it provided a weapon with which to battle against recurring scarcity. It might mean the private profit of a few, but it

also guaranteed a bare subsistence for many more, because as long as there was natural scarcity some men would always continue to make things to sell to other people. Thus the private advantage of those who produced, according to classic theory, always coincided in a measure with the needs of the many.

But these are theoretic reasons which we discover afterwards. In the final analysis private ownership of the means of production was tolerated because it required no organization. It was the easiest and readiest method of ensuring that production was somehow carried on. It required no planning, no central authority, no foresight, no system. The brief exceptions to this rule, like the organization of the Roman corn supply or the medieval guilds, were limited in scope and uncertain in effect because of the technical difficulties of organization.

I. The Cost of Private Ownership

Yet the private ownership of the sources of wealth has been tolerated only at great cost. It is illogical — that is obvious; wealth which is needed by the community should, strictly speaking, be organized by the community. Or, putting it the other way round, a thing never becomes valuable until the whole community has made it so. A car is of no use without a road to run on. Logic, however, has never been one of man's primary necessities. The more obvious price of allowing private property in the means of production has been the gross inequality which has always gone along with it. The poor, those who own nothing themselves, we have ever had with us. No one needs to have the parable of Dives and Lazarus explained to him; the types are too familiar. And with poverty have come disease and crime to compose part of the regular pattern of civilized life. Again,

even if inequality in material things did not matter surely the moral price has been very heavy, for it has certainly overstimulated those competitive instincts which seem so necessary. As long as private ownership of the means of wealth is tolerated, so long will man also tolerate the lust for money and power which makes ownership its objective. The envy of the poor who wish to acquire what others have, and the grasp of the rich on guard to retain what they have, are the heavy prices we pay for tolerating certain forms of private property.

Yet man has never been a mere consumer of goods. This strange being on two legs has taken some time off from eating and sleeping to confess to himself that he has a spiritual urge. The poet has expressed it, the prophet proclaimed it, the philosopher has sought to expound the mystery why man

> being frail
> does on himself prevail
> and with a single thought
> can bring the world to naught.

He has always required a religion of sorts which would dignify him and make him something worth. He has sought after God to this end and created him in his own image but also in his sublimer image. One curious symptom of this spiritual nature in man has been his persistent attempt to dignify his inglorious struggle with the soil. Born in scarcity, compelled to toil and compete with many of the brute instincts of his being, it is as though he has sought to make this situation acceptable to himself by clothing it with moral meaning, as though he could persuade himself that after all it must be a good thing so to labour and compete and own. Thus he has quite literally made virtues out of his necessities. Unceasing toil he has sought to dignify as hard work which brings its own reward. The habits of the jungle which he

maintains in the struggle for existence he represents to himself as worthy ambition and self-reliance. The accumulation of private wealth he praises as thrift. And when inequality places the few rich over the many poor he has sought to mitigate the relationship by pretending that the rich are stewards administering their power in trust. Nor must it be allowed that the trust can be broken, for this would shatter the illusion and leave the spiritual temple bare and empty; so the poor must be exhorted to perform their duty without protest and remain content with their lot in life.

With such devices man has sought to reconcile to himself the most inhuman situations and the direst cruelty. The institution of property itself has been exalted and clothed with rights which make it sacred. The greatest Christian denomination on earth finds in property an essential means whereby man's spiritual capacities can be realized, as though his property were an extension of a man's personality. Thus has been reared the imposing edifice of the bourgeois virtues, the qualities of the solid citizen and the willing slave, those which the Greek philosopher was compelled to include in his ideal commonwealth because they seemed the only virtues within the reach of the uneducated and the men of common clay.

Yet thrift and industry and acquisition and worldly caution have never been anything but a second best for man. As ideals they testify to his stubborn capacity for turning evil into good, for clothing the bitter animal struggle against nature and his fellow man with some meaning and purpose. But they fall far short of his destiny and indeed can scarcely be considered moral at all. Their structure will not stand the test of ordinary logic. On the one hand, they accord praise to ambition, success and power, which are the fruits of victory in the struggle to own property; and on the other hand, they also bless poverty and obedience, which are the

results of defeat. The real truth is that neither the one nor the other do very much to ennoble man; privilege and poverty alike tend rather to make him worse. And how precarious is the morale of Christian capitalism wherein paternalism and exploitation exist side by side in dubious fellowship and the man of large charity is the successful pirate. As for the worker and the workless, when they parade or strike or make speeches or assault the police, how hard it is for the worthy citizen in his counting house or pew to decide whether all this radicalism is a passionate protest against injustice or just the trouble-making of a lot of bums and agitators. The moral code gives no clear guidance and draws no clear distinctions in such issues; it is confused because it is built on confusion. It takes the unmoral contest of man for existence and seeks to make it into the moral structure of man's universe. This cannot be done, for in the contest itself there has always been something which has thwarted man's spiritual nature, denied him his full capacities, extinguished his divine spark.

II. Religion's Search for a Socialist Commonwealth

The insight of that religious genius which inspired the opening chapters of the Bible was rather different. Grappling with the problem of man's origin and essential nature, it placed him in a garden tilled and watered, in which there was no need for toil and the stern struggle with nature had not yet begun. That is to say, in order to conceive man in his full stature it was considered necessary to place him in conditions of leisure and ease where he could converse with God in that early garden Utopia. Here at the beginning of the Bible lies embedded man's eternal dream of a better order of things. At present this is denied him by the stern necessities of a material existence; so in the story he is expelled

from the garden and the curse pronounced on him: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."[1]

There is no attempt here to dignify the material struggle. Rather it is a curse which needs explanation, and the explanation is sought inevitably by the primitive mind in some early sin. On the fable of that sin and fall has been reared an imposing structure of dogma which one day man will be happy enough to forget. It does not concern us here. It is only the writer's attempt to explain his main problem — why should man, capable of a secure and leisured existence and conscious of the spiritual freedom it would bring, be condemned instead to fill his days with care and accumulation. The story of Eden is at once the assertion of an ideal and a protest because it seems impossible.

The religious insight of Genesis is repeated in the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. The last prophet of the Jews, the founder of the Christian religion, returned to the ethics of the garden and affirmed them this time in explicit terms. "Therefore I tell you, do not trouble about what you are to eat or drink in life, nor about what you are to put on your body. Surely life means more than food, surely the body means more than clothes! Look at the wild birds: they sow not, they reap not, they gather nothing in granaries, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than birds? O men, how little you trust him! Do not be troubled then and cry, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'How are we to be clothed?' Pagans make all that their aim in life."[2]

These sentences crystallize the whole philosophy of life which the rest of Christ's teaching assumes. Their meaning

[1] Gen. 3:17–19.
[2] Matt. 6:25–32. Moffat's translation.

is unambiguous. Here are the ethics, the behaviour of an economic Utopia, in which material life is secure and therefore needs no personal provision or care. The sham virtues of toil and accumulation and worldly striving are rejected. They are not even accorded the place of the second best, but condemned outright as an obstacle to the spiritual life, a fetter on man.

It is easy to illustrate the same basic attitude from elsewhere in the Gospels. The type of character presented to the disciples as fit for the Kingdom is not the "economic man" but the child who plays. The worthy and careful people who get the first invitation to the great supper have only one failing, but it is fatal: they have to give some attention to their possessions. The business ability of the thrifty man who gathers all into his barns proves his curse in the end. The mere possession of riches is consistently condemned as a deadly peril to the spiritual life. It is not the rich man personally who is the trouble: God by a miracle can still save him. Rather is he the pitiful victim of an institution which entraps him and makes it impossible for him to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no room here for the pious doctrine of the stewardship of riches, despite one parable which capitalist Christianity has worked to death to carry the meaning desired. The rich man is no trustee in the Gospels; he must sell out in order to repent. As for the power which wealth confers, in pagan society, it is true, the great ones exercise authority and are supposed in some mysterious fashion to do good with it as though they were benefactors! But not so shall it be among you. He that is to be greatest must be the servant. Now, a society in which all are servants is a classless one in which there is no privilege of private property to distinguish a few from many.

There is no attempt in the gospel record to describe the proper organization of such a society. Religious genius was

too occupied with the task of affirming the quality of such spiritual life to be concerned with its necessary material conditions. It is part of the limitation of the Gospels that they ignore the technical problem. Four hundred years earlier the Greek philosopher had gone further and attempted to prescribe the proper system to support a true aristocracy freed from the chains of private property, whose members were to have no material interests which were not also those of all.[3] But it was only a class, not a community, that Plato was able so to envisage. Their free life of the mind was built on a necessary substructure of hard toil performed by the less fortunate who were suffered to own property in order to produce. The problem of social production was not solved, and it never could be in the ancient world, for there were no machines to solve it. Yet the ideal of the good life persisted.

It is entirely significant that when the earliest Christian communities were organized in the name of their Master they appear to have adopted spontaneously that form of economic organization most appropriate to his teaching. Thus there grew up the communism of the early church, with its central pool which received the common earnings and distributed to each according to his need, affording the twin benefits of security and unity to all of the faith. It does not destroy the ethical significance of this experiment to say that they adopted it in expectation of the imminent second coming, for obviously they would be moved to adopt the form of life that seemed closest to the Kingdom which was to come, and for which they had to prepare as rapidly as possible.

Nor was such Christian communism a unique symptom. Wherever the life of fellowship, the life of the mind and the spirit, has for a time flamed intensely — as among such sects as the early Pythagoreans, the original Epicureans, the

[3] Plato's *Republic*, book 3 sub fin. et al.

Franciscans or the religious communities of the East or in Gandhi's ashrama — there also is found the necessary condition of economic communism which forms the material basis of such religious experience.

III. The Failure of Early Communism

Early church communism was of course very limited in scope. It was a consumer's economy only; the problem of production was left untouched. In the pagan world in which the members earned their living the ordinary arrangements of private property remained. And thus when the church ceased to be a little island in a hostile sea and became part and parcel of the material world order, its peculiar economic organization was swamped. With it went much of the spirit, too; principalities and powers assumed their place and the ideal of a community of servants slipped into the background. But it persistently revived, particularly in the monastic orders, which were really attempts to organize platonic communities of spiritual aristocrats who should own and work their little states in common. But they did not solve the problem of man's destiny very completely, for their communal ideal never included the total life of men and women and children. These, too, remained islands in a secular sea and gradually adopted much of the ethics of property and privilege which they were organized to combat. And so they met their long decline.

The exhortation to live like the lilies of the field is not forgotten to-day, but it is commonly dismissed as a piece of philosophy appropriate only to the inspired, beyond the reach of ordinary human nature. This is a confusion. It is not beyond the reach of human nature. Any one who can remember some happy holiday or honeymoon is aware that for a brief hour a better flavour seasoned his ordinary life

of care. It would be much more true to say that such teaching, while true to the capacities of man, has remained untried because the material conditions for it have not been available. It is an impossible life for man in an age of scarcity. To organize a community in which good food and clothing and housing are guaranteed to all men, as they are to the daisies and the birds, is a technical problem which, as we have said, baffled all earlier civilizations and found poignant expression in the myth of man's fall. In a scarcity economy in which there is never quite enough to go round the Sermon on the Mount must remain an ideal. Before the ideal can be realized, two essentials have to be fulfilled. There must be a secure supply of material goods, produced without the cost of unceasing toil and concentration; and the community must be a collectivist one, with its members organized to produce and distribute these goods without competition or anarchy or gross inequality among themselves. But both these conditions waited on the advance of science. Hence the teaching of Christ, as of other religious geniuses on this point, was in the nature of a brilliant forecast of what would prove practicable only when man's mind had caught up with the needs of his spirit.

Hence the failure of the church and the world to realize fully the teaching of the Gospels was not so much a moral failure as a technical one: man's mind, not his will or desire, has been lacking. He has lacked the science to subdue the soil completely or to organize himself properly to share its wealth. Meanwhile, the hard necessities of the situation have forced on Christianity two contrary philosophies. There is that dualism which is foreshadowed in the later chapters of John's Gospel. This condemns the present world and its ways as being under sin, and yet while condemning it accepts it as the inevitable place to live in, meanwhile seeking refuge and virtue in another realm of piety and devotion

— or, in these days of bourgeois culture, it takes refuge in the world of art. This is an illogical creed but it contains some seeds of redemption. Or else there is secular monism, a sort of commercial Christianity, the one spiritual achievement of the Protestant business man, which has improved the world's logic at the expense of its morals. This finds the present world, with its property institutions, its acquisition, its ruthlessness, to be itself the home of virtue where self help and a sound Y. M. C. A. character will achieve all. These two philosophies continually compete with each other in the mind of the modern Westerner, whether he be the sort that goes to church on Sunday or prefers to play golf.

The industrial revolution, and the machine age which it has prepared for us, is still so near in time that it intoxicates us. We think that it has been important to us because we can now travel by air at two hundred miles an hour or make ice cream in a patent freezer. Its more profound significance still escapes us. We are not yet aware that because it has ended the long centuries of scarcity it has brought within our reach at last the ethics of the garden, that it has laid the material foundations necessary for the Sermon on the Mount.

What man in the last three centuries has done is to apply his brain in an organized fashion directly to the problem of the struggle with nature. The crucial step in his advance was taken when he applied science to the soil and by chemistry and machinery increased its yield tenfold. Even before he had accomplished it, his machines had begun to fashion the earth's materials into things to wear and use on a mass scale. So man has tamed the earth at last, and all because he has learned a new agriculture, and to replace his toiling hands by a machine. It is perhaps a sign of his spiritual nature that for so many thousands of years his brain refused to take more than a casual interest in his material struggle.

What mental powers he had developed he gave chiefly to art and literature, the things that refine and inspire his leisure. His spiritual reach overran his material foundation. Civilized in the old way he has been like an earnest student in a poor garret. When earlier cultures collapsed it was because their tenement was frail. If our own succumb likewise it can never be for the same reason. There are no barbarians to invade from without. Our dangers are from within.

What we have in our day and generation solved, did we but know it, is the problem of minimum supply. Famine and pestilence and dire poverty can now begin to disappear from the normal pattern of civilized life. Philosophic economists may wrangle over the academic question, "What constitutes abundance?" and whether, man's desires being illimitable, there can ever be abundance. But man's needs in order that he may taste the leisured life of the garden are not illimitable. Complete material security means that there must be enough food, clothing and houses available to organize a guaranteed service of these things for everybody. This is now becoming possible.

IV. The Vital Need for Social Change

If through man's science victory in the struggle with nature at last grows complete, is it not time to change some social institutions which were proper enough while the struggle was close and bitter, but which in an age of plenty have become intolerable? Is it common sense to tolerate any longer the private ownership of the means of production in an age when such ownership grows more and more illogical? Society was content to leave to a man his spade, that he might possess it and keep it in repair and put it to use to dig his land. To place each spade under collectivist management was a task of organization far too minute to be practicable.

But when the spade in a man's hand turns into a million spades, a factory covering ten acres of land, is it any longer common sense to leave this to his private possession to use or abuse or leave idle as he pleases? Capitalism itself has gone part way along the road to collectivization by establishing the joint stock company; it has made possible a collective ownership on the part of those who have money. But this goes only part of the way: it creates a capitalist class of owners with identical class interests, but not a community ownership.

Man has altered his method of production and increased his turnover a thousandfold — but his political and social institutions lag behind. The three necessities which compelled society to tolerate the private ownership of its wealth have all passed away. With a secure supply created and waiting to be consumed, there is no longer need to mobilize man's acquisitive and selfish instincts in the struggle with nature. In a world where work grows hard to find it is ridiculous to maintain artificial stimulants to work. Again, control of production for private profit, which was tolerable in the ages of scarcity, grows intolerable in an age of glut. While formerly the owner and producer had no motive to withhold production or to refuse to sell his wares, since he could always sell profitably in a scarce market, to-day he is compelled artificially to create the scarcity which will make his sales profitable to him. Thus he curtails production or raises prices: he closes down and his spade rusts, denying society the use of its own wealth. It is this which creates mass unemployment and an artificial poverty in a modern machine state. This is a different poverty from that of the past, and no longer tolerable.

But above all, the sheer mechanical task of organizing a collectivist system, which has thwarted man's incipient tendency to communism for so long, at last becomes technically

possible. We begin to see the things which have made it impossible in the past even as we discover their uses in the present. If society is to own and administer its means of production for the common good, it requires a government at once responsive to mass needs and able to order and administer production to fill those needs. The rapid transport of supplies and materials is one obvious necessity which is now met. There are others equally fundamental but less obvious because we take them for granted. First, there must be knowledge, a vast fund of organized information concerning all factors in supply and demand, before a wheel can turn or a lever move to good purpose in a planned economy. This grows from a philosopher's dream to a realized fact even in capitalist societies with their growing economic experience, their statistical services and their laboratories. Second, there must be daily rapid communication of knowledge from governor to governed, from unit to unit, from central office to local factory. The postal service, the telegraph, the radio and the printed word have filled the need. Without them the administration of any modern state would be impossible; with them the administration of the socialist state becomes credible. And finally, there must be a citizenry capable of knowledge: there will be the personnel of government, a corps of men and women large enough, intelligent enough and trained enough to plan and administer the vast collectivist enterprise — a civil service on the grand scale — a bureaucracy to its enemies, those whose minds cannot yet conceive the vast proportions and immense capacities and relationships of the socialist state. And there will be a population not only able to obey intelligently when it is necessary, but, as well, to convey their own needs and wishes when it is necessary. For this several generations of universal education, by teaching men to read and write and

express themselves, have prepared the way. For lack of reading and writing and an adequate civil service earlier civilizations in their maturity were crippled.

Meanwhile, the price of tolerating the private ownership of the sources of wealth becomes insupportable even as society becomes more conscious of it. A privileged minority, an aristocracy of ownership, had a part to play in the ages of scarcity; it was an ornament which did something to redeem and dignify the brute toil of the masses. But when the masses need no longer toil it becomes an offence. Man has in the past accepted greater extremes of riches and poverty than now exist in Western society, but the disparity becomes acceptable no longer, as rising discontent testifies. It is as though into the dumb consciousness of the masses some obscure realization of man's new destiny had already entered. They know they are somehow missing their birthright.

As for the moral cost, in strikes and lock-outs, class warfare and international warfare, such strife again has in the past often been accepted with stoic patience as part of man's normal lot, but it cannot be accepted patiently to-day. The world's conscience grows more restive as its intelligence increases. Its demand for peace grows more imperious. The millions who fall in war are no longer barbarians or professional fighters or the "scum of the earth," but men and women educated to a new sensitiveness. How can there be peace as long as the basic interests of employer and employee continually clash? This is the root relationship which underlies all others and poisons them. From the relation of the classes within capitalism is copied the code of behaviour that governs the relationships between nations. Societies which cultivate the predatory principle within their borders will also prey on one another.

V. Life and Leisure in the New Society

The economic state of the future will be built up in a series of state trusts, self-managing public corporations which in their general policies receive direction from the central organs of government. The things they make and sell will not be given away outright; money will remain the essential measuring rod. But what they receive from sales will return to the community, either directly as wages and salaries to their workers, or indirectly as a surplus to the state bank, which will use it for new capital requirements or increased social services as human wisdom sees fit. Such in bare outline is the economic picture.

There will be much more than that to make up the pattern of life in the new society; but it would be a grave error to dismiss this economic structure as a mere blueprint, one of several possible schemes and lacking in inner significance for the life of man. It deals with the ultimate issue from which even the more radical among modern thinkers, especially religious ones, continue to flinch. Shall the means of production, the mine and the mill, the bank and the counting house, continue to be private property? The material issue of supply, the moral issue of peace and good will and happiness, turn still on this. It is no use announcing fine generalizations about the abundant life or the co-operative commonwealth; it is no use merely denouncing the ruthlessness, the exploitation and the strife engendered in our Western society if on the prior issue of the place of private property we remain ambiguous. It is this which divides those that look fearlessly forward and have faith, from those who still cast a glance back and cling to the decaying institutions of the past which have grown dear to them through familiarity or the personal privileges which through them they are able to enjoy. They prate of regimentation, they exclaim against the loss of

freedom, they bemoan the supposed materialism of the socialist state; in effect, it is only their own privileged freedom and their own monopoly culture whose passing they deplore. How hardly shall the upper middle classes for all their intellectual penetration enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

With the passing of the private ownership of the means of production will come the last revolution of all — a change in moral standards and ideals. The bourgeois virtues will no longer dominate the spirit of man but will be shown up for what they are, a second best.

For as the machine gradually reduces toil and the working day grows shorter for all men, the gospel of hard work will cease to bear much meaning. It already grows meaningless to the workless, but there will be no workless in the new society; all men and women will work, but their work will cease to be held up as in itself a moral end: it will become a means to an end. Here again lies one of the ironies of capitalism, which exalts the individual duty of hard work but is forced to measure its mass labour not as an asset but as a cost, and is unable to reduce working hours sufficiently to distribute work to all because the labour cost of the experiment is too high and wipes out profits.

With the gospel of toil there passes also the gospel of thrift and accumulation. A modern economist [4] has remarked how nine-tenths of the activities of modern life revolve around acquisition, the earning of money and the power which money brings. Organized religion decays and loses its spiritual appeal just because it refuses to tackle this most essential matter; it dare not, for it is afraid of it. But in a socialist society the vast burden of social security which now weighs so heavily on private shoulders is transferred to the state. To provide for wife and children and sickness and old age from their personal resources, men plan painfully and labour

[4] J. M. Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion*, p. 308.

long and anxiously; they will speculate and exploit if they can for these ends, or scrape and deny themselves. What virtue is there in these things except the virtue of necessity? They will pass away in the new order, and the release will be a blessing.

It is this struggle for a bare security, rather than the quest for money and power, which still preoccupies the majority of mankind. Above the security line there are thousands who compete for something more: success, power, the chief seats. Under capitalism, though this class remains a small fraction, it embodies the ideal for the rest of men who would succeed likewise if they could. Will such worldly success, held out before the eyes of many a child by its ambitious parents, still count as one of the virtues in the new society? This is hard to answer, for man is and will remain competitive under any form of social organization. But success in a socialist state will at least lie more in leadership and less in the abundance of things which a man possesses.

And with the passing of these as ideals will pass also that modern charity which mixes piracy with paternalism without doing anything to redeem those that receive charity. Gifts of crumbs from the table, that help the giver to forget his privileges and persuade the poor to grovel obediently, are merely damnable. That is why state relief of the worker, while a poor thing and capitalism's only remedy for its own ills, is yet better than charity. The poor receive it as a right and retain their power to protest. Hence the rich, who are taxed for it, resent the institution. It is better that they should, for their resentment is a more honest thing than their charity and more pleasing in the sight of God.

So perhaps man will come to live in some measure the life of the garden. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount which cast a moral stigma on worldly care will prove to be a brilliant forecast of the release of man's spirit in the machine age.

It is always easier in describing such a life to be negative rather than positive, to say what it shall not be rather than what it shall. But some things can be said about it: the work that men and women do will vary greatly with capacity as it does now; remuneration also will still vary, but according to need rather than inheritance or chance or ability to accumulate. Necessary manual labour will continue to be reduced. In particular, the mechanical labour, the necessary motions of the worker at his machine, can in the new society be imposed sparingly on the population. For vast numbers their work will assume much more the character of that which only the professional classes at present perform, for it will be work performed to a social end and lightened by intervals of leisure. Indeed, if present society embodies any type of the ideal, it is the professional man, the teacher, the doctor, the writer, the technician and the public servant. These are our present aristocracy, did we but know it, and the forerunners of a nobler citizenship. In particular, the teacher and the public servant, in their deliberate choice of vocation, their complete security with promotion and pension guaranteed, their sense of service and their regular leisure, foreshadow the possibilities of the good life open to all men in the socialist state. If, as so often, the professional classes forget their true heritage and adopt the purely commercial virtues for their own, this is only because at present they are compelled to live in two worlds and serve two masters.

Or again, our society holds up another mirror to the future in the life of the student. Why do so many men and women who have enjoyed the privilege of a higher education look back to their college days and invest them with a peculiar quality, a glamour which they do not expect to recapture? It is not merely the glamour of youth. For a few years they were insulated from the economic struggle, free to engage in relationships which did not have to be chosen with any

thought of gain or advancement or status. Above all, it was a leisured life that they lived, part of which was given to the fascination of ideas and part to the sheer exuberance of living. This brings us to the final achievement of the age that is to come: leisure for all and the means to use and enjoy it.

First among its uses will be adult education, at present rather a painful process undertaken by working men in spare hours when they are jaded, or by earnest women who have never been trained for anything better than listening to a lecturer. What powers of study and contemplation and research will be released by the shorter working day it is impossible to say. But there is likely to be a demand for long intervals of respite from any labour, prolonged holidays which recur at stated intervals in the life of a worker, when he can become a student again if he wishes and study the techniques of his own work or the cultural heritage of his own and other languages; or, it is to be suspected, he will wish to study and dispute the politics of his socialist state, the science of government reborn as the Greeks once comprehended it.

Besides his mind, he will use his eyes and ears. He will go, as he does sometimes now, to the football match, the movie, the play, the concert; but he goes now in his tens of thousands only when the price is popular enough, and how rarely it is so as long as sport and the visual and dramatic arts remain commercial enterprises which serve chiefly the pleasure of the comfortable middle class. One need not follow him further along the path of enjoyment or attempt to prescribe for his leisure; most families will still prefer quiet holidays among pleasant scenery to anything else on earth — and they will get them in richer measure.

In such a leisured society many of the habits and tempers which at present afflict us will come to seem quite remote. It is impossible to estimate the emotional toll which is taken from millions every day by the continual struggle against

insecurity. The worry, the sourness and the bad temper, the caution which warns us against mixing or speaking with the wrong people, the quarrels which afflict domestic life — how much of all this is just human nature, as it is all supposed to be, and how much is it the unconscious effect of the economic struggle — "grim care that sits behind the knight as he rides"? We will not answer the question, though many a psychologist would be more positive. But surely such possibilities of release make the transition to the socialist state a fine adventure.

If increased leisure is to be one of the prizes of the new society, it is perhaps necessary to engage in a defence of leisure. Many a worthy Christian is prevented by his un-Christian bourgeois morality from appreciating the value of sheer spontaneous enjoyment — at least in other people. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and seems to have had a well developed capacity when he chose to take the passing hour as it came and live it in good company. To the pious of his day this damned him as a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Our own attempts to have a good time are so often clouded by the feeling that leisured happiness is a waste of time, an interval stolen from the real business of life, which is acquisitive toil. Here again some revolution in contemporary ways of thinking is overdue.

But leisure needs defence for another reason. Part of the bitterness of our present social order lies in this, that the little leisure which is granted to millions is by force of circumstance turned into something ungracious. A cultivated member of the middle classes, watching the proletariat strolling on the sidewalk or entering a cheap movie or picnicking amid paper bags in a field which once had wild flowers in it, will often exclaim against the folly of giving such people any more leisure than they have. He does not see the deep tragedy. If you fill people's lives with enough toil which is mo-

notonous and uncreative and whose purposes mean nothing to them, they will react uncreatively in their leisure hours. The flower of their whole life has been spoiled, once they have left some brief dream moments of youth behind. The amusements which under capitalism fill the leisure of the masses are a mere relief for jaded minds schooled to endure vacuous occupations and capable only of continuing the vacuum. When the material conditions of daily labour are altered, then will man realize his capacities for the leisured life.

Many who read this story of what life will be in the new society will be tempted to dismiss it as a piece of Utopianism. There are two sorts of Utopianism. The one is a faith in man's great spiritual capacities and a determination to visualize an order in which they can be employed: but with this faith and determination is combined a sorrowful realization of how hard is the road to that new order and how incessantly men need to be exhorted to believe either that it is possible or profitable so to live. This is the spirit of the story of Eden with its stern doctrine of the fall of man. It is the spirit of the Gospels, which contemplate the life of the lilies of the field and yet lay on man's shoulders a cross. The other sort in a haze dreams the goal as if it were easy to realize and indeed almost here already, dismissing the problem of how to organize it or generate faith in it, as though the announcement of Utopia were sufficient to bring it.

Faith in man's capacity we must have or we shall never have the courage to take the road at all. And with faith in man will revive faith in God. Released from the sterner necessities of his material struggle and more clearly conscious that he has other powers within him which have little relation to the struggle, man will look with fresh wonder for the source of such powers, for he will not easily find it in the mere conditions of his material existence. Our present acquisitive age has cast a blight over our spirit and bred an unreal de-

spair about our human destiny. There goes the worldly cynic on the one hand, with his shrug of the shoulder and his pessimistic interpretation of human nature; it is never his own nature that he so readily dismisses as inferior stuff. Blessed indeed are the poor, for they at least rarely have leisure to be cynical. And there is also the inverted cynicism of those who in the name of religion declare the human soul to be essentially perverted by its own fatal tendency to sin and wickedness. If man's sin has seemed so often irremediable, it is because he has so often striven with hard material necessity and brutalized himself in the struggle.

This is not the place to probe the final nature of the soul. From sin and failure it is not and will not be immune. But the picture of it as a human dynamo, full of vast energies but with grit introduced at every crevice which arrests its revolution and destroys its energies, would probably be a truer picture. Without faith in man's soul there would never be lasting faith in God, who created it that it might know him. And faith in either will not be easy again until we live in a better form of society.

This book will be read by those who have leisure and money to read it. Therefore it will be read mainly by a comparative minority of our population, the leisured middle class. To them the message of the new society is less Utopian than stern. From those to whom much has been given much is required. Inequality and unemployment on the North American continent are gradually producing a society after the European pattern. At the bottom a class, workless and landless and propertyless. Above them a multitude who earn very little, many of them peasants, many more of them industrial workers and nearly as many small clerks, continually fighting for security and a chance to live in a labour market now grown crowded. These are the majority; they are the least educated and the worst led section of the popu-

lace, and their growing poverty will not improve their manners or their morals. Poverty, we repeat, makes men worse. In such a society the comfortable middle class, capable, coherent, intelligent and still comparatively secure, has a crucial part to play. Before it lie two choices. Faced with the growing protest of the masses, a protest which needs sympathy to be understood for it will often be strident, and feeling also that its own security is threatened, the middle class can decide that this protest had better be suppressed. This will mean abolishing democracy as we now understand it, for it is essentially this democracy which allows the protest to be made. The political rights of the masses can be forcibly taken away from them. This will restore stability of a sort at the price of driving discontent underground, and thus our generation and perhaps the next one can continue to maintain its property institutions unchanged.

There is another course open. Seeing the underlying causes of this protest, we may decide to shoulder our responsibility for the remedy and attempt to organize the socialist state. In this case the protest of the unprivileged, so far from being suppressed, must be organized and led into creative channels. If the leadership is sound the social revolution, while not painless, may easily be bloodless. Only the middle class can supply the necessary leadership. Only a section of them is ever likely to rise to this supreme responsibility of serving their present age. Even a section would suffice.

In many European countries the middle class have taken the first choice. Possessed of democratic institutions, they have turned from them and taken the road that leads to autocracy and dictatorship, and have persuaded multitudes of the poor to follow them. If there is a greater hope that in North America the issue may be resolved differently, it lies in this: that in a greater proportion of the middle class there still glow the embers of a Christianity not yet dead. We are

all hopelessly divided between the capitalist ethic of acquisition and success and power, and the Christian ethic of the garden and the lilies of the field. But most of us have at some time caught a little inspiration from Christ even when we are unwilling to acknowledge it. There is now precipitated in our minds a death struggle between the old ethic and the new.

Three times the Gospels record that Jesus wept. Once, according to the story, it was for a friend who had died, but twice the tears are described which he shed over his city of Jerusalem. How significant it is that his bitterest sorrow should have been inspired by the spectacle of a whole society, the capital city and symbol of his nation, over whose destiny he yearned — "If thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belong unto thy peace, but lo, they are hid from thee." [5]

Whether we, nineteen hundred years later, shall better recognize where lies our peace is yet uncertain. Our children's children may arrive one day at the socialist state only through an avenue of strife and destruction. Or we may learn in time, nor give him cause to weep again over us.

[5] Luke 19:2.

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